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SIN AND REDEMPTION

By H. L. GOUDGE, D.D.

CANON OF ELY

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PRINCIPAL CHURCH SEASONS

BY THE  
REV. H. L. GOUDGE, D.D.

CANON OF ELY  
AUTHOR OF "OUR LENTEN WARFARE," "THROUGH THE DARK DAYS," ETC.

SIN AND REDEMPTION

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BY  
REV. H. L. GOUDGE, D.D.

London

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## PREFACE

THE sermons in this volume fall into two classes. The first nine, which give the book its title, form a simple course for Lent and Easter this year, which may, it is hoped, be useful to the parochial clergy. The rest, though for the most part specially connected with particular Sundays in the Christian Year, are miscellaneous sermons dealing as a rule with subjects about which particular difficulty is felt. They include such subjects as Prayer, the Resurrection of the Body, Our Lord's Miracles, the development of Christian doctrine, and the Christian view of wealth. The object of the writer in each case has been, while explaining the Christian teaching as fully as the limits of a sermon allow, to suggest how that teaching may best be explained to general congregations. Several of the sermons were preached during the war, and contain sentences inappropriate to-day; but it has been thought best to leave them as they stand.

*The College, Ely,*  
*February 3, 1919.*





# CONTENTS

SERMON	PAGE
I. THE CALL OF LENT . . . . . ( <i>Ash Wednesday</i> )	9
II. THE GLORY OF MAN . . . . . ( <i>The First Sunday in Lent</i> )	16
III. SIN . . . . . ( <i>The Second Sunday in Lent</i> )	24
IV. THE REVELATION OF GOD . . . . . ( <i>The Third Sunday in Lent</i> )	31
V. CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR . . . . . ( <i>The Fourth Sunday in Lent</i> )	39
VI. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST . . . . . ( <i>The Fifth Sunday in Lent</i> )	45
VII. THE OBSERVANCE OF HOLY WEEK AND EASTER ( <i>Palm Sunday</i> )	52
VIII. THE CROSS OUR GLORY . . . . . ( <i>Good Friday</i> )	59
IX. THE REVELATION OF THE RISEN LORD . . . . . ( <i>Easter Day</i> )	67
X. THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY . . . . . ( <i>Low Sunday</i> )	73
XI. THE GOOD SHEPHERD . . . . . ( <i>The Second Sunday after Easter</i> )	80
XII. THE LAW OF SACRIFICE . . . . . ( <i>The Fourth Sunday after Easter</i> )	88
XIII. PREVAILING PRAYER . . . . . ( <i>Rogation Sunday</i> )	95

SERMON	PAGE
XIV. THE LORD OUR POWER OF RECOVERY . ( <i>Ascension Day</i> )	103
XV. THE APPEAL OF THE ASCENDED CHRIST . ( <i>Sunday after the Ascension</i> )	109
XVI. THE HOLY GHOST . . . . . ( <i>Whit Sunday</i> )	117
XVII. THE NAME OF THE LORD . . . . . ( <i>Trinity Sunday</i> )	124
XVIII. THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES . . . . . ( <i>The Fifth Sunday after Trinity</i> )	131
XIX. SAUL . . . . . ( <i>The Sixth Sunday after Trinity</i> )	138
XX. WEALTH . . . . . ( <i>The Ninth Sunday after Trinity</i> )	145
XXI. PRIDE . . . . . ( <i>The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity</i> )	153
XXII. THE GOOD SAMARITAN . . . . . ( <i>The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity</i> )	161
XXIII. THE TWO VOICES . . . . . ( <i>The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity</i> )	168
XXIV. ANXIETY . . . . . ( <i>The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity</i> )	176
XXV. THE JOY OF THE SAINTS . . . . . ( <i>All Saints' Day</i> )	183
XXVI. THE CALL OF GOD . . . . . ( <i>Septuagesima</i> )	190
XXVII. INSPIRATION . . . . . ( <i>The Second Sunday in Advent</i> )	197
XXVIII. THE REALITY OF FORGIVENESS . . . . .	204
XXIX. THE APPEALS OF GOD . . . . . ( <i>St. Etheldreda's Day</i> )	210
XXX. SACRIFICE FOR THE DEAD . . . . .	218

# SIN AND REDEMPTION

SERMON I

## THE CALL OF LENT

*(Ash Wednesday)*

Joel ii. 12, 13

“ Yet even now, saith the Lord, turn ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning : and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God : for he is gracious, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, and repenteth him of the evil.”

AGAIN God calls us all to the observance of Lent. We are living in wonderful days. God has been very gracious to the English people ; and He is ready, we doubt not, to be more gracious still. If He has not failed us in the days of war, He will not fail us in the days of peace. Only, as we look forward to the new age which lies before us, with all its possibilities and its dangers, with all its hopes and fears, we must rend our hearts, and turn unto the Lord our God.

### I

What an opportunity for this we have in the fast of Lent.

“ The Scriptures bid us fast : the Church says, ‘ Now ’ ” ; and, as Church people, we should all obey. But why should we fast ? Few things are more senseless in the eyes of the world. Surely, men will say, we have



suffered enough in these last awful years. Now at last the nightmare of the war is over, and God has given us a splendid victory. It must be a time not for fasting, but for feasting. Surely we may now enjoy the blessings, which have been so long denied to us. Indeed, I have heard of one who said that, when the war was over, he would never deny himself again. But though it was a brave man who said that, I do not think that it was a Christian man. The day will come, if we are faithful to God, when we shall "hunger no more, neither thirst any more," but that day is not yet. Though one enemy lies prostrate at our feet, there are others who are erect and strong, and without God we shall never overcome them. We need God in the days of victory, as we needed Him in the days of conflict; and fasting has its place in the one, as it had in the other. For fasting is an expression of hungering after God, of grief that we know Him so little, though we might know Him so well. It is not merely an act of obedience to the Church's rule; it is not merely an act of necessary self-discipline; fasting is a seeking after God, without Whom we cannot live. It is the abandonment for a time of lesser blessings, that we may strengthen the appeal which we make for the higher. We take these earthly enjoyments which for a time we lay aside, and we say, "O God, I do not despise these earthly gifts of Thy goodness: most heartily do I thank Thee for them. But they cannot take the place of that knowledge of Thyself for which I was made. Therefore for the time I abandon them, that I may prove my sincerity, that I may force myself into sincerity, in desiring that which is higher and better far. Was not that the teaching of our Lord?" "The days will come," He said, "when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast." Which of us has the Lord so with him, as he would wish? Earthly victory may have given us much; but, if the Lord was absent, it has not brought Him back; and earthly victory cannot compensate us for His absence.

We do not want the feast without the bridegroom whose feast it is; and, if He is absent, we must seek after Him. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God"; naught else can satisfy.

## II

Lent, then, is a time for the quest of God; our fasting is to be the fasting of love; and the blessing that we seek by it is the fuller knowledge of God Himself. But fasting is but a help in the quest, and Joel does not place it first. First come the words, "Turn ye unto Me with all your heart"; then fasting appears, with weeping and mourning as an aid to this turning. We will follow the prophet's order, and try to enter into his meaning.

"Even now, saith the Lord, turn ye unto Me." Observe, brethren, that it is to God that we are to turn—to God as an actual living Person. It would not be enough to turn from our sins, even though apart from God we could turn from them. We must turn to God; we must speak with Him face to face, and be restored to right relations with Him. That is what we English people so widely fail to understand. Our moral sense is stronger than our religious sense, and we are therefore prone to merge religion in morality. In our best moments we say "I will arise," but we do not add "and go to my Father"; and so even the arising comes to little or nothing. It will be so, unless we learn better, in England to-day. All of us are hoping for a better world, a better England; there is a real desire to arise. But we think that we can "build Jerusalem" without returning to our Father, and that hope is vain. Brethren, let each of us look to himself. Turning to God means the coming to Him with penitence and prayer; and, the more we shrink from it, the more needful we may be sure that it is. "Take with you words, and return unto the Lord," says another prophet. Yes! we must take with us words—our own words are best;

no quarrel was ever made up without them. Save time from your business and your pleasures, and give it to God. Make a new effort to hold communion with Him. For a good Lent nothing is more important than this; without it all else will fail. Thousands of people will do almost anything rather than come face to face with God, and speak to Him simply and honestly. They will go to church; they will repeat prayers learned by heart, or read from a book; they will even communicate. What they will not do is to approach God, and speak to God as to a father, saying what they mean and nothing else. Let it not be so with us this Lent.

But though turning to God means more than turning from sin, it undoubtedly involves that, and it will fail unless the turning from sin is real. "Turn ye unto Me with all your heart." The heart, as Scripture speaks of it, includes much more than the affections; it includes "all that is within us"; but it is the will which is of primary importance. To turn to God with all our hearts is to turn to Him with the one desire of doing the whole of His will, and of doing nothing else. We must, as our Lord says, have the "single eye," which fills the whole body with light. What has been the main cause of our sins in the past? Not that we were obstinately set, nationally or individually, upon what was definitely evil. It was that, nationally and individually, we were what St. James calls "double-minded." We desired to do right, if it did not cost us too much; but we were not willing to make the sacrifices of pleasure and interest which doing right demanded. Now to turn to God with all our hearts is to turn to Him with the deliberate intention of doing His will, whatever it may cost, whatever we may have to abandon for it. Usually the greater part of the struggle centres round one particular sin. There is some one particular thing that we do, though we know it is forbidden to us; or some one particular duty, which we refuse to perform. Well! our obstinacy



must break. There can be no union with God unless we are in agreement with Him : and as His mind about right and wrong cannot change, the change must be in our own minds. Thus the prophet says, " Rend your hearts, and not your garments." If you try to rend a garment, it will resist at first ; but, if you pull hard enough, the break will come, and, after it has come, you can tear quite easily. So it is with the rending of the heart. When our obstinacy about the one sin is broken, the chief conflict is over. Detailed self-examination is important in its own place, but it belongs chiefly to those who are already seeking to live their lives for God. While we are double-minded, and the right relations with God are broken, it generally does not require any deep examination to discover the cause. We know it already, and our immediate business is to act upon what we know.

We pass to the third point in the prophet's words. " With fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning." The body, that is to say, must have its part in what we do, as well as the soul. The reality of our turning must be demonstrated in an outward practical way. Tears with us English people may not be within call ; to our loss rather than to our gain, the self-repression in which we have been trained has checked the fountain of our tears. But fasting is not beyond our reach, and in a real turning to God it ought to be given. We have thought of this point before, but let us dwell upon it a little more in detail. Soul and body are wonderfully bound together. Though the sins of which we have been guilty in the past took their rise in our wills, the body has been made to take part in them. Our bodies have been the instruments of sin ; the pleasures of the body are a large part of that which tempts us to sin ; and since our bodies have their part in the sin, they ought to have their part in the repentance. There is no repentance without willingness to suffer, and to refuse the call to voluntary suffering is really to refuse to repent. The reason why we fail to see this is, I

think, that we forget that our relation to God is a personal relation. We have sinned—we are, it may be, still sinning—not against some abstract law but against our Father Who loves us, and can be grieved by our refusal to love. Suppose that you had sinned grievously against the love of your mother or your wife, and that the sense of your cruelty and selfishness and of the pain you had caused came overwhelmingly home to you, you would not be satisfied with a mere moral reformation. If you were satisfied with that, your repentance would be but skin-deep. Nothing would satisfy you but an amends which brought to you suffering and sacrifice. You would not narrowly examine whether your action could really undo the past, or have much practical value in the present, though if it was of practical value to the person wronged, so much the better. Your object would be to express, in a way as to which there could be no doubt, that you grieved for your sin enough to be ready to suffer for it; and though the one that you had wounded might not wish you to suffer, nothing would so tend to heal the wound as your insistence upon doing so, because nothing would show so well the reality of your recovered love. So it surely is with God. To do right in the future is no amends for the past; to do right in the future would be necessary if the past had been entirely guiltless. We have to show to God, in a practical way, our sorrow for having sinned against Him. Remember that this Lent, and consider how best to act upon it. Do not make for yourself a multitude of tiny rules; that is irritating and harmful, and will involve you in scruples and uncertainty as to whether you have kept them. Make a few broad rules of abstinence, as to the observance of which no doubt can arise, and which you will really and painfully feel; offer your intentions to God, and regard them, when they are made, not primarily as a self-discipline, but as an expression of love and sorrow which you could not bear to abandon without necessity.

## III

So then in soul and body we will turn to God, and the motive of our turning shall be, as Joel says, the character of Him to Whom we turn, the fact that He "is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, and repenteth Him of the evil." Yes, it is the goodness of God which leads us to repentance, for it is His goodness which makes it so abundantly worth while. What may God not do for us this Lent, if we truly seek Him? Lent, it has been beautifully said, is "the springtime of the soul." Surely we shall not "be of a sad countenance" to-day; it is the enemy of our souls who should be sad. We, whom God is going to bless, will be glad, even though we lay aside what is pleasant to us. There may be difficulties of faith, which have long troubled us, but which Lent will clear away. There may be sins in the past too strong for us, which Lent will enable us to overcome. There may be perplexities, which Lent will enable us to see our way through. There may be prayers long unanswered, which we shall pray with new power and purity of intention, and to which Lent will see the answer. Above all, we may learn to know and love God Himself, as never yet have we known and loved Him. Only let us turn—to God Himself—with all our hearts—with fasting and with mourning—and we need not fear that we shall fail of the blessing which we seek.

SERMON II

THE GLORY OF MAN

(*The First Sunday in Lent*)

Gen. i. 27, 28

“And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

MANY years ago at one of our ports there was to be seen a lamentable spectacle. The *Great Eastern*, the largest ship built up to that time, was lying there absolutely useless for the purpose for which it had been built, and with its vast sides covered with advertisements. No more effective place for advertisements could well have been found. No one who passed would fail to look at the *Great Eastern*, or fail to see what was posted upon it. But what a degradation for that noble vessel! Brethren, there are thousands of us who resemble it. We are far more wonderful than any vessel, far more valuable in our Master's eyes. But we are quite useless for His purposes; as we are to-day, we are but advertisements of Satan's power.

I

To-day is the first Sunday in Lent, and Lent is a time for the Gospel. We do not so much need new truths as old truths grasped afresh and carried into practice.

Shall we begin, then, with the truth about ourselves? Be sure that we have here a great and noble subject. Those are no true teachers who teach us to despise ourselves. St. Peter tells us that we are to "honour all men," for in all men there is something to honour. Anger—even extreme anger—may be perfectly in place in dealing with us; very often we deserve it. But contempt can never be in place; God has placed us far too high for that. Though our hymn may call us "worms of earth," our Lord used no such language. "How much," He said, "is a man of more value than a sheep!" In the parable of the lost sheep He taught us how God seeks after us, not so much because of His great value to us, as because of our great value to Him. Let me quote to you Charles Kingsley's words: "Think of what you say when you say, 'I am a man.' Remember that you are claiming for yourselves the very highest honour—an honour too great to make you proud; an honour so great that, if you understand it rightly, it must fill you with awe and trembling, and the spirit of godly fear, lest, when God has put you up so high, you should fall shamefully again. For the higher the place, the deeper the fall; and the greater the honour, the greater the shame of losing it." Certainly there are moments when, as we gaze up into the sky by night, and think of the vastness of the universe in which the stars are pursuing their way, we feel very small and insignificant. Certainly there are moments when, as we think of the vast ages of the past, it seems to us that we ourselves can be of little account. But value does not depend upon size; if it did, a coal-heap would be more valuable than a diamond; and we ourselves are intended for eternity. You may take a telescope and sweep the sky by night, but, far as you may look, you will see nothing of more value than yourself. You may go back in thought over the long ages of the past, but you will find nothing else in God's world to compare with you. Indeed, so high has God placed us, that all our differences one



from another in strength, in intellect, in position, are as nothing compared with the differences which separate us from all other beings who share this world with us. If God made us, if Christ died for us, if the Spirit is given to us, we must be of infinite value to God. Brethren, let us think nobly of ourselves. It will not lead us to pride, if we give all glory to God, and think as nobly of other men.

## II

Let us consider our nature, and the purpose for which it has been given to us. We have been made in the image of God, and the image of God lies chiefly in the soul. Each of us, like God Himself, has a heart to love, and a mind to know, and a will to choose what he will do. God has a great purpose, upon which His heart is set, a purpose of blessing for all that He has made—there lies His love. He knows how to accomplish it—there lies His wisdom. Day by day He chooses freely the right means to attain His ends, and freely acts to attain them—there lies the reality and power of His will. So it is with ourselves made in the image of God. Why is it that you have come to church to-day? You have come because it was your purpose to come, because you desired to take part in God's worship, and to hear His word. But the desire would not have been enough without the knowledge and the power necessary for coming. You have come because you knew the way to the church and had the power to walk to it, and have freely chosen to exert your power. The desire, the knowledge, and the power, all were necessary. If but one had been wanting, you would not have come at all. There you see the image of God. What an honour to us that we should be able to love like God, to know like God, to choose and act like God! What a call to us to use our powers in a way worthy of them!

Thus far as to the soul; now as to the body. The

body is not in God's image as the soul is, but the body also is a wonderful work of God. It is the necessary instrument of the soul for its life in this world. Had we no bodies, we could not, as far as we know, reveal ourselves one to another, or act upon this material world at all. The souls of those who have passed away may be very near to us; but, since they are now parted from their bodies, they can no longer speak to us, or take their part in the life of this lower world. Thus we should never despise the body, or misuse the body; the body, like all that God has made, is in itself "very good." It is the soul's good comrade, not, unless it is injured by disease or worn out by old age, a clogging burden from which we long to be delivered. Especially observe that it is not the body which is responsible for sin; it is the soul that sins and corrupts the body, not the body that sins and corrupts the soul. Sin, as we shall see next Sunday, lies in our wills; we sin when we freely choose something which is contrary to what we know to be God's will for us; and it is the soul, not the body, which has the power to choose. If the body is a far greater source of temptation than it ought to be, that is because we have misused and corrupted it; we have only ourselves to blame. Brethren, honour your bodies as, next to your souls, your most sacred possessions. Never in the smallest degree allow them to be defiled; guard them, as far as you may, from injury. Care for our health is a Christian duty, as long as it does not lead us to shrink from what God calls us to do.

And now what is the purpose of this wonderful nature which God has given to us? Why did God make us? I know of no better answer than the old answer. God made us that we might know, love, and serve Him here, and be happy with Him for ever. He gave us minds that we might know Him, hearts that we might love Him, wills that we might freely choose His service; He gave us bodies that that service might be given here in this world where our bodies are our instruments of

service; He gave us both that by knowing, loving, and serving Him we might be united ever more closely with Him, and so share His own eternal life, and be happy with Him eternally. Let us look at this more carefully. If we do not see the purpose of our nature, we are sure not to use it aright.

We say, then, that our minds are given us to know God, our hearts to love Him, and our wills to serve Him. That, of course, is not to say that they are given us for no other purpose. The world is full of things that are worthy of the attention of our minds, and which we ought, as far as our opportunities go, to study and to understand. All round us are people who need our love, and whom God means us to love with that active and practical love with which He Himself loves us. So, once more, it is with our wills. We must exert our wills continually if we would rightly live our lives in the world; we must do many things daily with which God seems not to be directly concerned. But there are two things which we should ever remember. The first is that in all right study, right love, and right action, God has His part. The world is God's world, and to study the world is to study the works and ways of God. In learning about the one, we ought in some degree to be learning about the other. So it is even more plainly with our love of men and women. Not only is it true that to love them and devote ourselves to their welfare is to do what God does, and so to associate ourselves with Him; it is also true that those characteristics of others which call out most strongly our admiration and our affection are characteristics which God has given them, and which reflect in some far-off way His own characteristics. To love generosity and kindness and courage and truth—nay, more! to love such lower gifts as beauty and charm—is to love God as seen in man, and is in no way inconsistent with entire devotion to God Himself. So, once more, with the part we are called to take in the ordinary life of the world. If we take our part in it according

to the will of God, we are serving God by taking part in it, even if the fact is not continually present to our minds. That is the first thing to remember. In right study, right love, right action, God is always served and glorified. The second thing is this: we should never be satisfied with this unconscious or half-conscious service; we should seek after God Himself. As St. Paul says, God has made men "that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us." We are like children feeling after their mother, whom they know to be near in the darkness of the night, and touching one thing after another until they find her. God has made us for Himself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Him. It may be true that in this earthly life there can be no knowledge of God which does not rest upon our knowledge of that which comes from Him, and that we can only love Him as His works reveal Him as worthy to be loved. But it is not enough to love and study His works; we must find Him in them, and the view which they give us of Him must lead us to worship, praise, and prayer, and so to a knowledge and love of daily intercourse more direct and powerful than that which we obtain from the world. So it is with the life of daily duty. It is not enough that what we do should be in fact the will of God; we must recognize it as being so, and do it with all our might because it is so. Indeed, it is surely only in this way that we can by it lay hold of God and of eternal life. If we never look beyond this world, we remain involved in this world instead of rising above it, and so we remain unsatisfied. Knowledge of this present world never satisfies us; as the wise man says, "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." The love of men and women like ourselves never satisfies us; the sympathy and affection they give us is always imperfect; largely they misunderstand us, just as we ourselves misunderstand them. Almost equally unsatisfying, I think, is the life of duty for duty's

sake; the time comes, as the same wise man says, when all the labour we have laboured to do seems vanity and a striving after wind. It can only give us abiding satisfaction if we are drawing nearer to God by it, and deepening by it the union of our wills with His will. It is for all these reasons that the life of prayer is so immeasurably important. It is not merely that in prayer we lay hold of God more directly, and give Him new opportunities of revealing Himself to us; it is also that it is only when we come down from prayer to life in the world, and rise from the life of the world to prayer, that we find God and lay hold of God in the life of the world itself. It is in this twofold way that our glorious nature is rightly used, and its purpose fulfilled, in the life of prayer, and in daily life sanctified by prayer and by prayer brought into touch with God. Surely we shall never be satisfied with anything short of this. Only so shall we lay hold of the life which is life indeed, and so live with God here that we shall live with Him eternally.

### III

And now, with this wonderful nature of ours, and God's purpose for it in our minds, let us consider the lives that we are actually living. I do not say, are they bad lives? Perhaps they are not that. But are they worthy of us? Are our minds, our hearts, our wills being used for the highest purpose for which they were given to us? Are our bodies, their instruments, being used as instruments for the right ends? Are we indeed coming to know, to love, and to serve God better and better here, and so on the way to be happy with Him for ever, or are we receiving the grace of God very largely in vain, allowing ourselves to be used, like the great steamship of which we thought at the beginning of this sermon, for purposes for which we were never intended, and which are utterly unworthy of us? Brethren, what a tragedy is our life, and what a mystery! How is it that, having been made for God,



we try to do without God? How is it that, though we can never be satisfied apart from God, we seem to seek our satisfaction too often in anything rather than in Him? How the prophets felt all this! "The ox knoweth his owner,"—so God speaks by Isaiah—"and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider." Even an animal will find his way home; why do not we? "My people have committed two evils;"—so God speaks by Jeremiah—"they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." There must be something profoundly wrong to account for all this. What is it, and how shall we put it right? Should we not, had we never heard of the Gospel, expect that God would explain to us the mystery, and show us how even now our glorious nature may be rightly used, and its purpose fulfilled? It is of God's remedy that we shall think together this Lent. To-day I ask you but to honour yourselves—to be sure that for you, made in God's image, it is the high, the noble, and the beautiful that is natural, and the foul and the ugly utterly unnatural. I ask you to believe it a high honour to be men and women, and to do nothing unworthy of the position which God has given you.

## SERMON III

### SIN

*(The Second Sunday in Lent)*

Gen. iii. 8, 9

“ And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day : and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou ? ”

So, in the old story of the Fall, God came to look for man. “ Where art thou ? ” Who is it that speaks in this way ? Is it the Judge, who has come to pass sentence upon the criminal ? Or is it the Friend, who has come to seek his friend at the old meeting-place, and for the first time fails to find him ? It is the friend, not the judge, is it not, who comes to walk in the garden in the cool of the day ? Shall we begin, then, with that thought ? God is the Friend Who would walk with us in the garden of the world. He may be the Judge too ; He is so in this old story. But He is the Friend first, and, if we will have it so, He will be the Friend again, and for ever.

### I

Now it is this question, “ Where are we ? ” that we are going to consider to-day. We thought last Sunday of the glorious nature which God has given to us—of our souls, with their powers of knowledge, and love, and will ; of our bodies, by which we can manifest ourselves to others, and deal with the world

in which we live. But though that may tell us what we are, it does not tell us where we are. It is one thing to have a glorious nature, and glorious possibilities; it is quite another to make a right use of the nature, and so attain the possibilities. Indeed, the nobler our nature, the greater will be the disaster if it be misused and spoilt. You and I, for example, have been given by God the power of choosing between right and wrong, and that is a noble power. It gives us such an opportunity of glorifying God as nothing else in this world possesses. Other things may serve God, because they can do nothing else; we alone can give to Him the free, glad service of love. But suppose that we misuse this splendid power, and choose the wrong instead of the right. Then we fall lower than the animals; we injure God's purpose and displease God, as lower creatures cannot do. Now that is exactly what has taken place. The Bible, which takes so high a view of human nature, speaks very sternly of the use we have made of it, and our own knowledge entirely accords with what the Bible says. It is sometimes urged that religious teachers know little of the world. That is not in the least true of the writers of the Bible. If you want to see the facts stated as they are, you need only read the fifth and the fifty-ninth chapters of Isaiah, or the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. St. Paul knew well enough that we were made to know God, to love God, to serve God, and to be happy with Him for ever, but he was very far from supposing that God's purpose was being fulfilled. He said that men were walking in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that was in them, because of the hardening of their hearts; who, being past feeling, gave themselves up to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness. In a word, mind, heart and will were corrupted together, and all touch lost with God's eternal life.

But we need not to-day consider the life of the world,

How about ourselves? Suppose that such words as those of Isaiah and St. Paul are not true of us, as indeed we may hope that they are not. Are we ourselves fulfilling God's purpose for us? Do we hear Him, love Him, and serve Him at all as we might? Are we using our souls and bodies in the way that He intends? If we look back into the past, how much we all see bitterly to regret! Even when we were saved from falling into serious sin, how often we were only just saved! And to-day, as one of our hymns says, is it not true that they who fain would serve God best are conscious most of wrong within? "From within, out of the heart of man," says our Lord, "evil thoughts proceed: fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness." It may be that in God's mercy we may have been, in fact, kept from many of these things, but, even so, I do not think that our experience will incline us to be hard upon those who have not been kept from them. Impulses to all manner of evil exist in us all, and at times it is all we can do to keep them under control. What is our human nature like to-day?

"O man, strange composite of heaven and earth!  
 Majesty dwarfed to baseness! fragrant flower  
 Running to poisonous seed! and seeming worth  
 Cloaking corruption! weakness mastering power!"

That is what we are; it is useless to disguise the facts. Our real task is to find the way to deal with them.

## II

Now, brethren, what is the cause of this? We say, of course, that sin is the cause. But then what is sin? Do we know what we mean by it? Sin has to do with our relation to God Himself, and unless we understand our true relation to God as His children, we shall not understand the meaning of sin. Consider, then, what

God's purpose is. It is not merely that we should know, love, and serve Him; it is that we should know, love, and serve Him in the world which He has given us as our home. It is not we only who are wonderful; the world is wonderful too. It is full of possibilities that have not yet been realized; it is like a great estate which awaits development. Now God surely means us as His children to work with Him for the development of the world, that all His purpose for it may be fulfilled. A father likes to work with His children, and not apart from them. Even though the help they can give him is not very great, he likes to have it, for it is by common work and mutual helpfulness that family affection grows. So surely it is in God's dealing with ourselves. Our powers of mind, and heart, and will ought to be consecrated to God. We ought to work, not just for selfish purposes of our own, but for God and the whole human family to which we belong. What a heaven this earth would be if we did! The whole human family would be knit in bonds of love. Man would no longer be against man, class against class, or nation against nation. There would be no possibility of war, and the disasters which it brings. Eternal life would begin for us even here. Living in perpetual union with God our Friend and Father, we should find our minds enlightened and our hearts filled with love, and our wills strong to do all that we were called to do. Our bodies would be the willing instruments of our souls for the happy tasks set to us. What, then, is sin? It is the refusal of the position and task intended for us; the refusal to work with our Father for the fulfilment of His purpose. It is the opposition of our wills to His will, the attempt to find a private and selfish satisfaction for ourselves instead of working with God for the good of all. When we sin, we use the very powers which God has freely given us that we may work with Him, to thwart His purposes, and, so far as we are concerned, render their fulfilment impossible; and we do all this—knowing, at any rate



in part, what we do—for some miserable selfish end of our own, as if our Creator, Who moment by moment preserves us in life, had no claim upon us, and we existed simply to please ourselves. That is sin. It is personal opposition to God Himself, an injury done to Him. It is folly in relation to ourselves; it is cruelty and wrong in relation to our neighbours; sometimes it is crime against the laws of our country; but against God it is sin, an utterly unjustifiable thwarting of His loving purpose, the setting up of our wills against His. As the prophet says, two cannot walk together unless they are agreed; and since our wills are now opposed to God's, we cannot walk with Him. Now observe the consequences which follow. We find ourselves alienated from God, unwilling to think of Him, or to speak to Him, unable to draw upon His grace; and our human nature, so glorious in itself, becomes altogether out of gear. It is like a piece of machinery that has lost something necessary to its proper working. Our minds, left now without the divine light, become darkened; we fail even to recognize our own best interests, and deliberately seek the things that are for our ruin. Our hearts lose their power of affection. Not only are we without love for God, but our natural affections are weakened, and we lose our sympathy with our fellow-men. Our wills, left without the divine strength, lose their grip, and the bodily passions break loose and become our masters. Note that especially. People say that they cannot control their passions, and, when they have lost hold of God, there is truth in what they say. In the animals the passions are controlled by instinct; in ourselves they are not. They are meant in us to be controlled by the enlightened reason and the resolute will; and when, by losing hold of God, our minds have become confused, and our wills weakened, they are not controlled at all. So the world and human life become what we see them to be to-day. They are not what He meant them to be; they are a mere parody of His

purpose. And the fundamental cause of the failure is our refusal of the Divine rule, that opposition of our wills to His will which we call sin. Brethren, if God is to save us, He must deal with sin and get rid of it—there is no other hope for the world. “Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: save me for Thy loving-kindness’ sake.”

### III

And now there are just two aspects of our sin, of which I will speak briefly, and if the thought of them does not arouse us, I fear that there is nothing that will. The first is the guilt of sin; and the second is its power.

Consider, firstly, the guilt of our sins. Sin deserves punishment. We all recognize that, when we think of the sins of others. How clear we have been about it in the case of the Germans! Well, it is as true in the case of our own sins, as in the case of theirs. “We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” What does that mean? How God’s judgment will one day be exercised we do not know; but that it will be exercised, our consciences surely bear witness. A world in which justice was not at last done would not be God’s world at all. Think of it in this way. On our wills, our characters, our inmost selves, is stamped the record of all that we have done. The wicked desire fostered and accepted, the slander spoken, the act of dishonesty or of impurity done—these things may pass from our memories, but they do not pass from our souls. God needs no recording angel to write down what we do; there on our souls, naked and open before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do, the record of our lives is written.

“Our deeds still travel with us from afar,  
And what we have been makes us what we are.”

And the guilt of sin means this : that God must take us as He finds us, and pass judgment accordingly. Certainly our sins may be done away. God will not hark back to the past, if we ourselves have ceased to be what in the past we were. But remember what sin is. It is not just a stain that may be washed out, or a burden that may be unfastened and fall off. Our sin lies in our inmost selves, in the repeated and ingrained opposition of our wills to the will of God for us. There can be no forgiveness of sins until all that is altered.

And then, secondly, there is the power of sin. That, as we all know, is a great reality. The worst penalty of sin is that it leads to more. The sin, which shocks us the first time we commit it, shocks us less when we commit it again. Each time the temptation grows stronger, and the resistance of our wills grows weaker, till we become the slaves of our sins, and say that we cannot master them. That is what we have all to fear. Let me quote to you some words which put this very clearly : " Sow an act, and you reap a habit ; sow a habit, and you reap a character ; sow a character, and you reap a destiny." It is our actions which form our habits ; it is our habits which form our characters ; and it is the characters we have formed which must determine our eternal future. If God at the last sends any of us away from His presence for ever, if He excludes us from the kingdom of heaven that He will one day establish, it will not be because it is His wish to exclude us ; but because here we have formed characters that would make His kingdom a misery to us. It will be not because He would not accept our repentance, but because we have reached the point where we have lost the power to repent. Beware of sin's power. We never know how great it is until we try to break it.

## SERMON IV

### THE REVELATION OF GOD

*(The Third Sunday in Lent)*

John xvii. 25, 26

“ O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee; and these knew that thou didst send me; and I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.”

THESE words are the final words of one of the most wonderful chapters in the Bible. It is that in which our Lord, just before He goes to His death, looks back upon the work which He has already done, and prays both for His disciples and for all who will believe after them. What is it that the Lord says? The world did not know God, but our Lord knew Him; the disciples knew that it was from God that our Lord came. To them our Lord has revealed the name or character of God, and is about to reveal it more perfectly by His Death, His Resurrection, and the Gift of His Spirit. And the purpose is this: that the very love wherewith the Father loved the Lord may be in them—nay, more! that the Lord Himself may be in them, the secret spring of all their Christian life.

#### I

Now it is of this revelation of the name or character of God that we will think to-day. Two Sundays back we thought of our glorious nature, and its possibilities, of the purpose for which God made us. Last

Sunday we thought of our sin, and of the ruin which it has brought. There can be no eternal life with God for sinners who persist in their sin. But we may be sure that, though our sin and the misery it has brought are very contrary to the will of God, they have not taken God by surprise, or in any way led Him to despair of us. From the first He had His remedy prepared, and if only we will use His remedy, we may all yet find our nature restored, and dwell for ever with Him in the life eternal. What, then, is God's remedy? It is Jesus Christ Himself, our Prophet, Priest and King—our Prophet who reveals to us the truth which we need to learn, our Priest to bring us back and unite us with God, our King to rule us, to protect us, and lead us in our warfare for the extension of His kingdom. Let us understand clearly that the work of our Lord is not to save us in and in spite of our sin, but to save us from our sin. Not even He can save us while we go on in it. To that end the three parts of our Lord's work are all necessary. He must so reveal God's character to us that we shall desire to return to Him; He must open a new way by which we shall be able to return to Him; and He must preserve us in obedience and loyal service after we have returned. Never mind though all this is not quite clear at the moment. It will, I hope, become clearer by and by. It is of the first work of our Lord only that I am going to speak to-day, His work as our Prophet or Teacher. What, then, is it that we all most need to be taught? Above all, we need to learn what God is. There will be no true repentance, or faith either, till we have learned that. Do we know of ourselves what God is? Our Lord said that we did not. "No one knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." I do not mean that we have no true idea of God at all. The greatness and beauty and order of the world no doubt may give us some idea of God's power and wisdom. Our consciences may tell us something of His holiness and of His authority over us. But



neither gives us such a revelation as we need. Perhaps there is no one whom we so misunderstand as our Heavenly Father. Indeed, I believe that till our Lord enlightens us, there is in the hearts of us all a mistrust of God, if not a positive dislike of Him. No doubt that is due in part to the remembrance of our own sins, but it is not due to that alone. It is due in part to the injustice and disorder that we see in the world, and which we think God ought to remove; the horrors of the war deepened in many this distrust of God. It is due in part, also, to false teaching, which we have received about Him. I have read of a child who said, "I love Jesus, but I hate God." Very badly must that poor child have been taught. Now all this misunderstanding is disastrous. It is the goodness of God much more than His severity that leads us to repentance, and till we grasp how great that goodness is, there is little likelihood that we shall really repent. But our Lord came to teach us just what we need to know, to teach it not only by His words but by His life. He spoke to us, indeed, of the character of God, but He did more than this. He gave us a revelation of it in His own life and work. So He made known to us God's name, and still makes it known.

## II

Consider, then, this wonderful revelation of God which our Lord has given us. The whole religion of many of us would be transformed if we could lay hold of it. How can God be made known to us? Is it possible by any human language to describe God so that we may understand Him? Can we ever describe the things which are really great? Suppose that you had never seen the sun or the sea. Do you think that any one could by his words make you understand what they were like? One glimpse of the sun or of the sea would teach you more than any words could teach you. Now so it is with God. God Himself must draw

near. God Himself must shine out upon us from the clouds which surround Him; then alone shall we know what He is. Now that is what happened when our Lord came. There was, we believe, so wonderful a union between our Lord and the Father, that to see the One was to see the Other. "Through the eyes of Jesus," it has been beautifully said, "God looked out upon the world, and in Jesus' love and purity and yearning for the sinful and heavy-laden, God Himself became visible." Do you remember how St. Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us"? I think that he desired some glorious manifestation in a blaze of coloured fire. But what was the Lord's answer? "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" And then the Lord went on to say that His words were not just His own words, but the Father's; and His works, not just His own works, but the Father's. There is no difference between the mind and heart of the Lord and the mind and heart of the Father. To love the One is to love the Other, and to hate the One is to hate the Other. If the little girl whose words I quoted really loved Jesus, she loved God, though she did not know it. The being that she hated was not God at all. What, then, was our Lord? That I cannot tell you in a few words to-day; you must study the Gospels for yourselves if you would know that. But what kind of picture do the Gospels give us? It is a picture of One Whose whole life was a life of love, of One Who was ever ceaselessly at work for the good of men. "My Father worketh hitherto," He said, "and I work." Our Lord in His love gave Himself no rest, no leisure sometimes so much as to eat. Not only did He never refuse any one who asked His help; He went from village to village and town to town to put it within men's reach; and if that meant sacrifice and pain, He was ready for

sacrifice and pain. Our Lord gave up everything as it was asked of Him, His home, His family, His friends, His comfort; at last, He even gave His life for us and died upon the Cross. Holy He was, utterly holy. Never was there a thought of impurity, or bitterness, or malice admitted to His mind. Strict He was, startlingly strict. Those who followed Him had to be ready implicitly to obey. There was nothing easy-going about our Lord. There was an authority about His words and His whole bearing which seemed to those who saw Him entirely new, and which filled them with awe and reverence. But there was nothing harsh or repellent about Him. He would go to the house of any one who invited Him. He would eat and drink with the worst sinners; He did not shrink from the touch of the fallen woman. Terribly stern though His denunciations were of pride and cruelty and wrong, He had forgiveness ready for all who would turn from their sin. And then His power and His wisdom! God shone out in them, too. He could cure all manner of sickness; He could raise the dead; even the wind and the sea obeyed Him. He had a wisdom and knowledge that others could not understand. How had he come by them? they asked, and they could find no answer. He could read men's thoughts; He could foresee their actions; He knew in advance what the experience of His followers would be; the Passion and Death and Resurrection were all foretold by Him long before they came. But there was nothing terrifying about His power, or about His wisdom; for they were all used in the service of His love. Power is terrifying indeed when it is in the hands of an enemy, or of one whom we mistrust. But if we discover that one who loves us has power that we never suspected, so much the better. So it is with wisdom and knowledge. We delight to find them in the possession of a friend; the more that he has of them the better. Now, my brothers, do you understand that God is like that—that between our Lord and the Father there is in

character no difference whatever? Do you understand that God is not One Who sits in lonely majesty looking on, and judging, but that He is One, like our Lord, ceaselessly at work for the good of all, ceaselessly bestowing every blessing we are ready to receive, ceaselessly desiring to bestow more blessing? Do you understand that the Lord dying for you on the Cross is the revelation not only of our Lord's love for you, but of the Father's love? Do you understand that the holiness of God, the strictness of God, great though they are, have nothing repellent about them, that His mind and heart towards sinners are exactly what the heart and mind of our Lord were? Do you understand that you should never think of God's infinite power and wisdom without remembering that they are like our Lord's power and wisdom, the power and wisdom of a Friend—that they are both used in the service of love, and used in no other way? Oh, that we might all understand this! If we fully grasped it, we should repent immediately. I do not mean repent only of the great sins we may have done, but of the tiniest sins too. We should feel it not to be borne that, with God such as He is, we should not be heart and soul with Him. Think of it—God ceaselessly at work for us all, suffering for and with us all, using His power and wisdom to forward His purpose of love for us all, and you and I caring nothing about it, interested in our own affairs only, loving none but ourselves, and those especially connected with us, and, so far from using the powers our Heavenly Father has given to us that we may work with Him, actually using them to thwart God's work in what we are foolish enough to think our own interests! Can we bear to think of it? But that is what sin means. We never understand it until we see God. What makes it what it is, is not just that it sets aside God's law, but that it is an outrage upon God's love, that God's laws are simply the laws which His love lays upon us, because they are necessary for our welfare and for the welfare of all. Can we refuse to

obey such laws as these? If God were the hateful God in Whom some seem to believe, it would be right to disobey Him. We would refuse to submit for exactly the same reason that we refused to submit to Germany; we would go down fighting. But the real God—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—the God Who is like Christ Himself, and of Whom Christ is the one perfect revelation—His laws we will love and keep, because we love Him, and know that His laws spring from His love; and if we have broken them, we will repent from the bottom of our hearts.

### III

You see then, I hope, how our Lord revealed God. But that is not all. In revealing what God is, He revealed also what we must be. "Be ye perfect," our Lord said, "as your Heavenly Father is perfect." Our Lord did not need to live two lives, one to reveal God and one to be an example to us. The same wonderful life that revealed God taught us at the same time our own duty. How could it be otherwise, when we have been made in the image of God? Our life ought to be like our Lord's life, a life of service for others to the utmost of our power; our holiness, like His holiness, ought to be the gentle attractive holiness of the Lord, and not the repellent self-righteousness of the Pharisee. Whatever power or knowledge or wisdom we possess ought to be used in the service of love, and in no other way. That is to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. My brethren, what is the repentance that God asks of us to-day? Is it only for the evil things that we have said and done? No, it is not. We should repent of them, of course; we must repent of them. But what I think many of us need to repent of a thousand times more is the good things that we have left undone, the love we might have shown and did not show, the service we might have done to others and refused to do, the evil and the cruelty which we saw



and might have resisted but were too great cowards to resist. God calls us to repent of that in the name of His love. He is ready to receive us back through His Son—we shall think of that another day—but the life to which we return must be His own life, the life of service and of self-sacrificing love.

SERMON V

CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR

*(The Fourth Sunday in Lent)*

Gen. xlv. 4, 5

“ And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life.”

It is a wonderful forgiveness which is here described to us; there is nothing else like it in the Old Testament. Great indeed had Joseph's injuries been; great now was his opportunity for revenge. But he does not take it. His mind is filled with the thought of the way in which God has overruled for good his brothers' cruelty. They meant it for evil, but “ God meant it for good ” both to him and to them. Joseph would have them recognize the wonderful purpose of God. In spite of the past it is not too late for them to co-operate with it.

I

Now, my brothers, we surely see here the very spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. “ Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” “ Come unto Me.” The Passion of our Lord, like the passion of Joseph, was something in which, though men had one purpose, God had another. The Passion of our Lord, like the passion of Joseph, ends in an appeal made by the innocent to the guilty to come to Him. Moreover, if we look at the saving work of Joseph, it will, I think, help us to

understand the saving work of our Lord. Our Lord, as we saw last Sunday, is not merely our Teacher, but our Saviour too; and though it is not difficult to understand how He is our Teacher, it is difficult to understand how He is our Saviour. That we need a Saviour is plain enough. We are sinners, and we need forgiveness. We are, in a greater or less degree, under the power of sin, and we need the divine grace if we are to rise out of it, and attain those glorious possibilities which the image of God puts within our reach. But it is not so easy to see how our Lord can help us here. We speak, indeed, of His dying for us, and rising again for us. But what is the meaning of this language? What can the Cross and the Resurrection of our Lord have to do with obtaining for us the forgiveness and the grace which we need to-day? The truth is that very often we use language about our Lord's salvation which does not really convey much to our minds. Well! the story of Joseph may help us. It will not explain everything. The Death and Resurrection of our Lord are mysteries too great for our minds to fathom. But perhaps the story of Joseph will enable us to see a little way.

## II

How, then, was it, let us ask, that Joseph became the Saviour of his brethren? It was because, though he was their brother, he had attained a position immeasurably higher than theirs. They were still what he once had been, poor men exposed to all the dangers which the chances of the world might bring; but he was lord of the land of Egypt, with all its resources at his command. And how had he reached this great position? Not by seeking after it, but by the patient endurance of cruelty and injustice at his brothers' hands. Joseph is an example of the great law, that if we are to help others effectually, we must be men of sorrows, and that it is suffering which brings power and influence. Joseph was his father's beloved son,

in whom his father was ever well pleased. He was hated by his brothers, because he was so different from them, and because of his dreams that he would one day be exalted over them; and because they hated him, and rejected the claims which he made, they delivered him up to the Gentiles. And we know what followed. In the land of Egypt he was condemned on a false charge; he had, though innocent, to suffer as a sinner. But it was through the suffering that he was brought to that great position, in which he became the saviour of all his family. Had Joseph remained in the land of Canaan, he could never have become the saviour of his brothers; he would have starved with the rest. But because he had to bear the suffering which their sins brought upon him, he obtained the power to save, and to bring his whole family to be with him where he was.

Now so it was with our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the beloved Son of His great Father, God; in Him the Father was ever well pleased. And He, too, was hated of His brethren, for the same reasons as Joseph himself. "The world hateth Me," He said, "because I testify of it, that its works are evil." He, like Joseph, had His anticipations of future glory. "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." It was for His witness and for His claims that He was called to suffer. He, too, was stripped of His garments, delivered over to the Gentiles, condemned on a false charge, made to suffer with two malefactors, to one of whom He promised salvation. It was all that was worst in the people of His time, as it was all that was worst in Joseph's brethren, which brought Him to His Passion. But it was through the Passion, and through the Passion alone, that He reached the glory which is His to-day. "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the Cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that

in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The glory that our Lord enjoys to-day, His position at God's right hand as the Lord of all, exercising His Father's authority, and dispensing His infinite resources, as Joseph exercised the authority of Pharaoh, and dispensed the resources of the land of Egypt—all this is our Lord's, because of the suffering and death which He accepted at our hands. If our Lord had never died—if He were still living in the land of Palestine—He might indeed do much for us; but He could not do what He does to-day. He could not be the source of our forgiveness, or of the Divine grace which raises us out of our sins. But our Lord at God's right Hand can do all this, and more. He can even bring us, as Joseph brought his brethren, to be with Him where He is. "Father," He prays, "that which Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me." It is a wonderful parallel, is it not? I cannot but think that it is no mere accident, but a parallel intended by God that we may gain insight by it into the work of the Lord for us.

### III

And now, if this be so, can we think of the words of the text as addressed by our Lord to us? Certainly we may, if we have repented, as Joseph's brethren repented. We all have our share in the guilt of the Cross of Christ. Though it was the people of our Lord's day who were immediately guilty, we all must accept our share of responsibility. Our Lord, as St. Peter tells us, was "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and it was in view of the sins of us all, and the need of atonement for them, that God delivered Him up; for all we know,



every sin that you or I have ever committed may have made His burden the heavier. We must repent, if the Lord is to say, "Come near to me, I pray you," and to tell us that our grief for the past may be swallowed up in our joy at the salvation which God has used it to procure for us. But what the story shows us is that it is not our Lord's way just to wait for our repentance; He leads us to repentance by the discipline through which He passes us. That is the last thing which I shall ask you to notice to-day. The teaching of this wonderful story is not yet exhausted; there is profoundly practical teaching waiting for us still.

You see, then, that in the old story, though the heart of Joseph towards his brethren is the same all through, He does not at first reveal himself. The first thing is not to forgive his brethren; it is to bring them to recognize their need of forgiveness, and to test the reality of their repentance. That is surely why Joseph, though he recognizes his brethren, makes "himself strange unto them," and speaks "roughly unto them." That is why he insists on their returning, and fetching Benjamin, and why he binds Simeon, and keeps him as a hostage till they return. It is not that he is really harsh; he has their sacks filled with corn, and takes no money for it. But when after serious sin conscience has gone to sleep, it needs disaster and perplexity to awaken it. It is the anguish, the despair of Joseph's brethren, which sends their thoughts back to the past, and leads them to say, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." More than this, we can surely see that the coming of Benjamin, and the trouble into which Joseph's craft brings him, gives his brethren the opportunity of showing whether they are still the same men that once they were. Benjamin was to their old father Jacob just what Joseph once had been, the favourite son, of whom it was only too likely that they

would be envious. That is why Judah's speech is so very important. Read it—it is one of the most beautiful things in Scripture. It is a speech full of love to his old father Jacob, and full of noble self-sacrifice. Whereas of old Judah had been ready to sacrifice Joseph for himself, now he is ready to sacrifice himself for Benjamin. It is when Joseph sees that, and not before, that he reveals himself, and pours out his heart of love and generosity. And surely we may well believe that our Lord's method with us to-day is the same method. If we are to be forgiven, we must become the people whom it is right to forgive, and God's discipline is designed to make us so. The troubles that He brings upon us, all the harshness and cruelty with which we may seem to be treated is to bring the past to our memories, to lead us to confession of it, and repentance for it. It is to give us special opportunities, if not of undoing the past, yet at any rate of showing that we are now different from what once we were, and, that, if we had our time over again, should act differently. Behind it all is the loving heart of our Lord, waiting to forgive, and, when the discipline has done its work, we shall receive His revelation of Himself, and hear Him say, "Come near to me, I pray you." Brethren, if we ourselves are to-day under discipline, let us not misunderstand it. It is the discipline of a father, the discipline of a brother. Let us see that it does not fail of its purpose.

SERMON VI

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

*(The Fifth Sunday in Lent)*

Heb. ix. 13, 14

“ If the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh : how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ? ”

THESE are words of grand encouragement to all who desire to draw near to God. God is indeed the living God—One absolutely real, with a purpose for the world, for which He is ever working ; the service which He asks of us is a real and living service. And the dead works of our past lives are a great hindrance ; they burden our consciences, and prevent us from rising to the service which God asks of us. Can we get rid of them ? The text says that we can. The blood of Christ can cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God.

I

Brethren, we will think again to-day of the saving work of Christ. We thought of it last Sunday, but we need to enter more deeply into it. How we all require it ! Left to ourselves, as we saw not long ago, we are just what our past actions have made us. The guilt and power of sin, of those dead works of which the text speaks, do we not know them in our own experience ? Left to ourselves, we have no means of getting

rid of them. There they are, those evil deeds of the past; there they are, burdening our consciences, weighing down our spirits, filling us with anticipation of punishment, and making the glad service of the living and loving God for us impossible. Our Lord as our Teacher is not enough. He gives us indeed noble and beautiful teaching, and a most noble and beautiful example, but—burdened with those dead works of the past—we cannot rise to them. We may watch a man playing the violin admirably, but that does not enable us to play it ourselves; and, in a similar way, we may see very clearly the example of our Lord, without finding ourselves able to follow His example. It is the dead works which stand in the way. Till we really try, we may not think that it is so. That is why those who are not trying judge so harshly those who are; they suppose that, if they themselves tried, they would do far better. But directly we really try to follow our Lord's teaching and example, we find that the sins of the past and the harm they have worked in us, stand in the way and refuse to let us rise to the highest that we see. St. Paul exactly describes the situation: "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." Christ the Teacher carries us a long way with Him. By showing us what God is, He makes us desire to serve Him, and, by showing us what we ought to be, He points out to us the way to serve Him. The trouble is that we have not the power, and so we need our Lord not only as Teacher but as Saviour also.

## II

We look, then, at our text to-day. There is, you see, a contrast between the power of our Lord's sacrifice for us and that of the Jewish sacrifices. We need not stay to consider the latter; we can deal with our Lord's sacrifice without that. But there is one thing which needs explanation, and that is the expression,

“The Blood of Christ.” I need not remind you how often the Bible speaks of that, how frequent are the references to it in our hymns and prayers. No one can possibly be an instructed Christian who does not understand something of what is meant. Yet I fear that there are many who go on using this language year after year without attaching to it any intelligible meaning. Now in the language of the Bible and of the Church, the blood stands for the life. We ourselves sometimes speak in a similar way. We speak of our soldiers shedding their blood for their country, or as giving their lives for their country, and in both cases we mean much the same thing. But the Hebrews of old went further than this, and thought that the life of a man or of an animal was actually contained in the blood. That is why they spoke of the blood of a murdered man as crying for vengeance from the ground, and why the blood of their sacrifices was poured out at the altar. What they meant to offer there was not just the blood, but the life that they thought contained in it. Fix it, then, at once in your minds that the blood of Christ means the life of Christ given for us, and that, when we say that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin, we mean that His life given for us does this. But then what is life? What a mystery it is! Think of the soldier, as he leaps out of the trench, full of energy and courage. And then in a moment a bullet passes through his brain, and he lies dead. Life, we say, has departed. But what is life? What exactly is it that has departed? There is no one yet who can tell us that. But this, at any rate, we know. Life is the greatest thing in the world, as well as the most mysterious. It is this life which in some way preserves the body from decay. The great proof that life has departed is that decay has begun. It is this life which fights against disease, when disease attacks the body, and seeks to cast it out. I am speaking popularly, not scientifically, since it is popular belief rather than scientific knowledge which explains best



the language of the Bible. It is this life, again, which is necessary for growth in the child and in the plant. We delight to see our children, as we say, full of life. When we are weak and depressed, we say that what we really need is something to put life into us. Yes; life is the great need. As our poet Tennyson says—

“ ’Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant;  
Oh ! life, not death, for which we pant;  
More life, and fuller, that I want.”

And, if what is true of the body is true of every part of us, our Lord Jesus Christ never used words more precious to us than when He said, “ I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.”

You see, then, that when we speak of the blood of Christ, what we really mean is the life of Christ; and that what we really need, if we are to be cleansed from dead works to serve the living God, is to have the life of Christ imparted to us. Not for a moment do we forget the Lord's death. But what chiefly makes the Lord's death of value to us is surely that, because He gave His life for us at Calvary, He can impart His life to us now. We saw last Sunday how it was with Joseph. He became the saviour of his family by suffering cruelty and injustice at their hands, not because his suffering in itself was of any benefit to them, but because it was through his suffering that he reached the great position in which he possessed the power to save. So it is, we believe, with our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because He has suffered cruelty, injustice, torture and death at the hands of the world, that He has reached the position from which He is able to save the world. But what He gives is something far higher than anything which Joseph could give. Our Lord offers us His own life, the life which made Him what He was, that it may enter into us, and cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God. On the Cross, as the text says, Jesus Christ offered Himself, a victim without spot of sin,

to God; there for us He poured out His blood, or gave His life; and now He calls us all, who desire to be cleansed from the sins of the past that we may serve the living God, to draw near unto Him, and receive the life He offers us.

### III

Now, my brothers, it may be that to some of you this seems very strange teaching. Christ the Teacher you understand, but with Christ the Saviour it is otherwise. Well! I think He knew it would be difficult to understand, and so in His days on earth He gave us in His miracles for the body pictures that would help us to understand the greater miracles that He works for the soul. Our Lord, you will remember, was not only a Teacher, even when He was here; He was a Saviour too, at any rate for the body. How did He heal men's bodies? Let us see.

"And there cometh to him a leper beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And being moved with compassion, he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean." You see the stages: on the leper's side there is the coming, the kneeling, the expression of faith in our Lord's power to heal; on the Lord's side there is the compassion, the stretching forth of the hand, the touching, the word of power; and the cure is worked. "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean"—that is what the leper says. "I will; be thou made clean"—that is what the Lord says. There must be faith on the man's side; there must be the Lord's touch; and then the power or life of the Lord passes from the Lord to the one who touches Him, and he is made whole.

Take another example: "And a woman which had an issue of blood twelve years . . . having heard the things concerning Jesus, came in the crowd behind,

and touched his garment. For, she said, If I touch but his garments, I shall be made whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her plague." The method is the same. There is the coming, the faith in our Lord's power to heal, the touching of His garments to establish contact with Him; and then the power, the life, goes out from the Lord, and the woman is perfectly healed. Faith in our Lord's power was necessary; the crowd who thronged our Lord received no blessing by touching Him. Contact was necessary; the woman would not have been healed by staying at home, and thinking about our Lord. But immediately there is the touch of faith, the blessing follows. I believe that it is the same method that our Lord employs to-day. What He looks for is the touch of living faith. Though the Lord is hid from our eyes, He is close at hand. In His holy sacraments He condescends to our weakness, and draws near to us in ways that we can touch and see. The water of Holy Baptism, the bread and wine of the Holy Communion, are like the Lord's garment that the poor woman touched, means of establishing contact with the Lord Himself. If only we draw near to Him there with a living faith—repentant for the dead works of the past, desiring to be cleansed from them that we may serve the living God, believing that the Lord is able to cleanse us, and will do so—then the life that is in Him passes out from Him into us, and makes us whole. That is what He has gained by His Cross and Passion—the power to save. He calls us to Him that we may receive what for us He has won.

My brothers, how will it be with you on Easter Day? All who have been confirmed are called to the Lord then; not one must be absent; we may not turn our backs upon our Lord on the greatest day of the year. To turn our backs would mean that we do not want our Lord's salvation. But how shall we come? That is the question. Shall we just be there, crowding

round like the throng that pressed our Lord, and received no blessing from Him, or shall we come with the touch of faith, desiring to be cleansed from dead works to serve the living God? Shall we say that we are not fit? What sort of fitness is it that the Lord requires? Do you think that the leper was fit to touch our Lord, or that the woman with the issue of blood was fit to touch Him? Every Hebrew would have thought their touch most defiling; but our Lord did not. They longed to be healed; they believed in His power to heal them; and so our Lord's power did heal them. Be sure that it is the same He asks to-day. Do you want to be rid of the sins of the past, and to do them no more? Do you want the power to serve the living God? Do you believe that, if the Lord wills, He can make you clean? If so, He calls you to Him. Of course, there may be those who have fallen into what St. John calls sins unto death, sins which separate us from our Lord altogether, and would separate us from the society of His people, if our sins were known. Those who have thus fallen do feel, and rightly so, that they cannot claim their place in the Lord's family till the sins have been confessed, and the Church's absolution given. I am not speaking of that to-day. But what hinders multitudes from receiving the life of the Lord to their cleansing is that they have never grasped His power to cleanse, or turned to Him with the touch of living faith. Let that not be so with any of us this coming Easter Day. Say now, as you look forward, "If I touch but His garment, I shall be made whole." Say then, as you come to the Lord who offers you His life, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

SERMON VII

THE OBSERVANCE OF HOLY WEEK  
AND EASTER

*(Palm Sunday)*

Matt. xxvii. 22

“What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?”

It was morning—the morning of the first Good Friday; and Pilate, the Roman Governor of Jerusalem, was standing on the steps of Herod’s palace, with a great crowd before him. Of all that had happened in the previous night the crowd probably knew nothing; the apprehension of our Lord had been arranged without the knowledge of the great body of the people, since the priests feared that they might take the Lord’s side. Why, then, had the crowd come? Pilate was accustomed at every Passover to release a prisoner in honour of the feast; and there was at the time a notable prisoner, whose release they ardently desired. But Pilate thought that he saw his opportunity. He knew that it was the envy of the high priests that had caused the Lord to be handed over to him, and he would have liked to deliver the Lord, if he could have safely done so. He appealed, therefore, to the people. “Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?” But they cried for Barabbas. Then came the great question of the text, “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” And they all said, “Let him be crucified.”



## I

Brethren, it is this great question that I wish to put before you to-day. All of us are called to judge of Jesus Christ, to decide what we shall do with Him. And—here is the point that we should notice—in judging our Lord, we really judge ourselves. We reveal to God, and to any who may know our judgment, exactly the people that we are. Of course, in saying this I assume that we have been taught enough about our Lord to be able to judge of Him; God will not hold us responsible for unavoidable ignorance or mistake. But if our knowledge of our Lord is true knowledge as far as it goes, the judgment we pass upon Him is, in fact, a judgment passed upon ourselves; a better indication, I believe, of our real character than anything else we could say or do. Moreover, I think you will find that as you read the story of the Gospels, you do, in fact, judge everybody by what they did with our Lord. It is so especially in the story of our Lord's Passion. That wonderful question, "What shall I do with Jesus?" was a question which, somehow or other, no one could escape, and we judge everybody in turn by the answer given.

It came to the chief priests and Pharisees. "What do we?" they said, "for this man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. And we know the answer they gave. "It is expedient for you," Caiaphas said—not right, but expedient—"that one man should die for the people," and we see at once what Caiaphas was, and the men who followed him.

It came to Pilate, as we have already seen to-night. He did not wish it to come; indeed, he did his best to escape it. He sent our Lord to Herod; he referred the question to the people: but, do as he would, the question came back to him, and he had to answer it. And we know the answer he gave. He knew that the

Lord was innocent, and yet he gave Him up to death. We see what Pilate was.

It came to Herod, though it ought not to have come, and we know how Herod answered it. He treated our Lord just as a new excitement—hoped that He would work a miracle; and, when He did not, mocked Him, clad Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. We see what Herod was.

It came to the people, though, again, it ought not to have come, and we know how they answered it. They preferred Barabbas to the Lord, and cried out that our Lord might be crucified. We see what the people were.

It came to Judas—what shall I, Judas, do with Jesus?—and we know how he answered it. Once convinced that the hopes he had formed of earthly advancement by following our Lord were doomed to failure, he cared for Him no longer, and betrayed Him. We see what Judas was.

All these alike we judge by their answer to the great question, and by that alone. In other stories about them we take little interest; we look simply at what they did with Jesus, and judge them accordingly. Moreover, as it is with our Lord's enemies, so also it is with His friends—with St. Peter, for example, or with St. Mary and St. John. How strange is the way in which we judge of St. Peter by his denial of our Lord, and of St. John by his comparative faithfulness to Him! It is not as if we knew nothing else about them. The Gospels tell us much about both these Apostles, and their writings even more. But it is their dealing with our Lord by which we judge them. If only they could all, friends and foes, have looked forward! If only Pilate had known that centuries later, here in an island of which he knew little but the name, our Creed would never be said without his own name being mentioned, and that we should judge him entirely by what he did with our Lord! If only St. John could have looked forward and known that his statue

would be here on the rood-screen because he was the one apostle who, with Mary, dared all the cruelty of the mob and the soldiers and stood beside his Master ! By that one test of what they did with Jesus we condemn the one, and we honour the other.

## II

“ What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ ? ” Brethren, it is the great question still, the question by which we stand or fall, and shall stand or fall to all eternity. How comes it that it is so ? It is because of all that our Lord is and is meant to be to us. It is because He is the revelation of God, the great example, the Saviour from sin, the Way to the Father, the Lord and Master of our lives. We cannot think of all this to-day, but take the points most familiar to us. Our Lord is God’s beloved Son, the one adequate picture and revelation of what God Himself is. In dealing with our Lord we are dealing with God. To love the One is to love the Other : to hate the One is to hate the Other. Again, the Lord is the Saviour from sin, and for that reason, again, it matters exceedingly what we do with Him. To turn away from Him when we know what He is means that we do not desire to be rid of our sins, but prefer to go on in them. So, again, if we think of Him as the Lord and Master of our lives, whom God has appointed to rule us in His Name. When the Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration heard the words, “ This is My Beloved Son ; hear Him,” they heard the great command in which all others are contained. God may have other ways of judging the heathen, but He must judge you and me by what we do with His Son and the word He has spoken to us. All the day and every day we are believing our Lord or not believing Him, obeying Him or not obeying Him. “ He that rejecteth me ”—we read that our Lord said—“ He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him :

the word that I spake, the same shall judge him at the last day." Though in one sense the Passion of our Lord is long over, in another it is still going on. We can, as a New Testament writer tell us, "crucify to 'ourselves' the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." He is concerned in all that we say or do. We can act the part of Judas, or Pilate, or Herod, or Caiaphas, as we can act the part of St. Mary and St. John. But though that always is so, it is never perhaps quite so clearly true as it is at this time of the Christian Year. Jesus is coming near to us in His Passion and in the glory of His Resurrection. What shall we do with Him?

What shall we do with Jesus this week? You know what this week is; it is Holy Week. All weeks are, or ought to be, holy weeks, but this week most of all. To-day, Palm Sunday, our Lord rode into Jerusalem in triumph, claiming to be the Christ, the long-expected Deliverer. On the following days He was teaching the people in the Temple, and defeating the efforts of His enemies to entrap Him; on Thursday He instituted the Holy Eucharist, and suffered the Agony in Gethsemane; on Friday, after a night of shame and torture, He was crucified. And, though it is but a little way that we can any of us see into the great mystery of His suffering, we believe that all which He endured He endured for us. His suffering was necessary for the perfecting of His sympathy with us, for the completion of the example which He came to give and of His life of obedience to the Father. It was necessary in order that, as our representative, He might bear death, sin's characteristic punishment, and rise through and out of death to that higher position whence He can save us by the gift of His life. But it is surely enough that He endured it all for us. What shall we do with Jesus this week? What, above all, shall we do with Him on Good Friday? Shall we give to our Lord our time, as far as it is our own to give, or shall we keep it for ourselves? Will Friday be to us

Good Friday, or will it be rather a Friday of selfishness if not of sin, a holiday and not a holy day or "good" day at all? Do you think that it matters to our Lord what we do? He would greatly have changed if it did not. How He welcomed the love of the woman who, as He said, anointed His body aforehand for the burying! How He praised the Apostles for continuing with Him in His temptation! How He called them in the garden to watch with Him! Surely we shall try this week to do Him honour, to show that we care about what He has done for us. It is not much that we can do, but we will do what we can.

Once more, What shall we do with Jesus on Easter Day? Brethren, you know what the Holy Communion is. It is your appointed meeting-place with Jesus Christ. He will be here next Sunday ready for you; will you be here ready for Him? Let me appeal to those of you who have been long absent—absent, it may be, since last Easter. Why has it been so? Holy Communion is not just a form, which we may use or reject. It was not our Lord's way to institute forms. It is not a way of claiming to be better than other people. If they think so, that is their mistake. It is the appointed way of remembering Jesus Christ, as He told us to remember Him, of confessing Him before men, as He told us we must confess Him, if claiming our own place among His people, and our own share in the salvation won for us. Which of these things is it that you do not wish to do? Certainly you must not come without preparation. The longer we have been absent, the more serious should our preparation be. But there is no time of the year when preparation is so easy. What the Lord asks of us is repentance and faith; and, if we are ready to leave our sins, those opportunities which Holy Week and Good Friday offer to us of considering both our Lord's suffering for us, and the purpose of the suffering, ought to be of the greatest assistance in leading us both to repentance and faith. Do not miss those



opportunities. To-day, Palm Sunday, resolve that, God helping you, you will be at the table of the Lord next Sunday, and then use the opportunities of the week as part of your preparation.

### III

“What shall I do with Jesus?” Yes; there is no other question like that. There are many questions, doubtless, in our minds to-night. One is troubled and perplexed about one thing, and another about another, and some of our perplexities are important in their own way. But ten years hence, twenty years, fifty years, how much will these things matter? In fifty years most of us will have passed from the world, and the present difficulties which trouble our minds will long have ceased to concern us. But upon our answer to the question of which we have thought to-day, the answer which we gave to it while we were here, all will depend. What would all those who took part in our Lord’s Passion now give to have their time over again? Brethren, let us give to this question the right answer. Let us say, This I will do with Jesus: I will believe the revelation He has brought to me; I will seek to follow His example; I will accept Him as my Saviour from sin; I will receive Him as my heavenly food.

SERMON VIII

THE CROSS OUR GLORY

(*Good Friday*)

Gal. vi. 14

“Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

THESE are strange words to come from the lips of St. Paul. How, we say, could he glory in the Cross? To a Jew, the Cross was a sign of the subjection of his country; it was only because the Romans were his masters that the Cross was seen in his country. To a Christian Jew like St. Paul, the Cross spoke of the darkest and most terrible of days, the day on which his Master had died a malefactor's death. We might have thought that St. Paul could never have thought of the Cross without a shudder. And yet, you see, he gloried in it, and would glory in nothing else. There were many things in which he might have gloried. He was a man, before his conversion, of high position and great influence; he was a member of the Sanhedrin and a Roman citizen. He had been called after his conversion to be the first missionary to the Gentile world, and had done more for the kingdom of God than any other Apostle. But in no one of these things would he glory. “Far be it from me to glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

## I

We will think to-night of the Cross our glory. The evening of Good Friday is a time of peace. "It is finished." We think of our Lord's Agony as over; He rests in Paradise; and we can look back and consider the meaning of what He has done. The Cross of our Lord is a deep mystery which no one of His servants has ever fathomed, but we should seek to enter into it as far as we may. For we, too, need something in which to glory; life without enthusiasm is hardly worthy of being called life. We want something which will quicken our pulses and fire our energies; something that will be to us an unfailing source of encouragement and of joy. And, brethren, we shall find this neither in ourselves nor in the world, as at present they are. God forbid that we should despise ourselves, or the world either; the Cross, as we shall see, teaches us to despise neither the one nor the other. But, if we are not to despise them, a light must fall upon them which is more than the light of common day; we must learn to see them in the light of God. Perhaps no one ever better understood the facts of the world and of human life than the author of Ecclesiastes, and he did despise both the one and the other. The world is, as he said, a world of suffering and of death; human life, if there is no hope beyond, is a life of ceaseless disillusionment. We must look beyond the world, and beyond ourselves, if we are to glory. What, then, shall the ground of our glorying be? St. Paul found it in the Cross, of which we have been thinking to-day. Perhaps we may find our own ground for exultation where he found his.

## II

Why then, let us ask, did St Paul glory in the Cross?

He gloried in it, firstly, because it was the greatest

of all revelations of the love of God. The Cross means to us what it does because of the immeasurable greatness of Him Who died upon it. It is the Cross, not of a mere man like ourselves, though He Who endured it was indeed man with all our capacity for suffering; it was, as St. Paul says, "the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus was "the Christ," the centre of the world's history, the great Deliverer sent by God for the establishment of His kingdom; He was "our Lord," the Lord "both of the dead and of the living." And, that being so, then the Cross must have a great place in the fulfilment of God's purpose. There had been a time in St. Paul's life when our Lord's greatness had been hidden from him. How did he think of the Cross then? It seemed to him a plain proof that Jesus had died under the curse of God. "Cursed," the Law had told him, was "every one who hangeth on a tree." But Jesus Himself met him on the road to Damascus, and dispelled that delusion; He showed him once for all that, so far from being rejected and condemned by God, He was alive for evermore at God's right Hand. If that were so, if Jesus were, indeed, the Christ, the Lord of all, the Cross must be a part of His redeeming activity, a grand proof of the love of God, and of the value which He sets upon us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." "God commendeth His love towards us"—brings it out, and shows us how great it is—"in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Brethren, is not that, indeed, something in which to glory? Nothing is so great a glory to us as the love of others for us. Our wealth, our power, our position in the world—it is utterly foolish to glory in any of these things. All these things are really external to us; they are no part of our real selves. But with the love of others it is otherwise; love shows that we have a value. And if that is so with the love of men, still more is it so with the love of God. That God so loved us as to

give for us His only-begotten Son, that He would do anything and bear anything rather than leave us to perish in our sins; surely we are right to glory in that. "He loved me, and gave Himself to me"—He, the great Christ, our Lord—that was what the Cross meant to St. Paul, and it transfigured the world for him. It should transfigure the world to ourselves also. No one who believes it can any longer despise himself or his brothers.

But then the Cross meant to St. Paul far more even than this. The love of God which it revealed was a practical love, a love which brought to us a great uplift, a love which had abiding consequences. It was the Cross which was our reconciliation to God. There on the Cross, of which we have been thinking to-day, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." There our Lord did for us what as sinners we ourselves were bound to do, and enabled us to do it after Him. What is the amends that we all should make to God for our past sins? We cannot undo them. But we ought to recognize what they have been, understand the evil of them, utterly condemn them, and ourselves for being guilty of them, accept willingly the punishment which they bring, and show that we detest our past disobedience by obeying God perfectly now whatever the cost may be. But can we rise to all this? Surely we find it beyond our power. You and I, just because we are sinners, cannot fully understand the evil of our sins, or condemn them as we should. You and I, again, just because we are sinners, tend to resent our punishment, and to shrink even now from the suffering that full obedience is sure to cost. How, then, can we make amends? But what we cannot do, Jesus our brother could do for us. May we not think of our Lord on the Cross as acting in our name, Himself, though sinless, bearing willingly the suffering that Sin has deserved, offering to God the perfect obedience that as yet we cannot offer, and all this at the cost of



agony and death? But even that was not all. The Cross, as we have seen already this Lent, was to our Lord the path to a more glorious life, a life from which He can give to us His Holy Spirit, and enable us to do after Him what He on the Cross did for us. The Cross won for us the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit can convince us of the reality of our sin, teach us to hate it and condemn it as our Lord hated and condemned it, to accept the punishment that is laid upon us for it, and yield ourselves up to God to obey Him in all the days to come. Now all this gives us fresh reason for glorying in the Cross. We glory in it because it is the means of our reconciliation with God our Father. In a true sense the reconciliation has been made already. We may not all at once feel about our sins as our Lord felt about them; but if we believe that what He felt about them was what we ought to feel, if we try to feel and act as He did, and if the Lord by the gift of His Spirit is continually more and more bringing us to feel and act as He did, God can look forward to the time when the mind of Christ will have been reproduced in us, and so be reconciled to us even now. Is not that a great thing in which to glory? We are reconciled to God; His love is ours; we can look up to Him as our reconciled Father, and live in the light of His favour.

But even this was not all that the Cross meant to St. Paul. It was the Cross which had led him to break with the world, and to live a life raised above the world. So it is that he has no sooner said, "Far be it from me to glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," than he goes on to say, "through which the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world." And, brethren, if we wish to understand the meaning of these words, we have only to look at the life of him who wrote them for us. The Cross made the world and St. Paul dead the one to the other. The world of which here he speaks is not the world which God loved, and for which the Lord was content

to die, the world of men and women. It is the world as St. John speaks of it, the world that is dominated by that trinity of evil, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." It was not just that St. Paul renounced it in words; that we have all done. It was not even just that he renounced it in will and intention; that, I hope, we are all trying to do. It was that, in following the call which came to Him from the crucified and glorified Lord, he had been led to a life which meant the complete renunciation of the world in his daily practice. What place could there be for the lust of the flesh in a life spent "in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness"? What place could there be for the lust of the eyes in one who had "suffered the loss of all things," and lived in daily peril of death? What place could there be for the pride of life in one who was made as "the offscouring of all things," and who five times had borne the indignity of being publicly beaten? The glorying lay here that by suffering from the world, with which he had broken, he was raised to a life above the world. By fully sharing the Cross, he was being brought to a full sharing in the Resurrection also. "Always having about in the body the dying of Jesus," "the life also of Jesus" was "manifested" in his body. A power far greater than his own bore him on triumphant, and enabled him to do the Lord's work, and extend the Lord's empire. As men heard the message of the Cross, turned in faith to Him Who died upon it, and felt the touch of His Spirit, they too learned the love of God, were reconciled to Him, and began to live lives raised above the world, as St. Paul himself did. That is the great and final reason for glorying in the Cross. It has not only power to reconcile, but power to uplift and save. It is not only true that the great Christ "died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but for Him Who for their sakes died and

rose again"; it is also true that through the Cross of Christ, if we accept the claim which it makes upon us, and try fully to respond to it, there comes to us continually the power so to live. We are crucified to the world, and the world to us, and so rise continually to the life of power and usefulness.

### III

And now to-day, as we stand in thought beneath the Cross of Christ, let us ask ourselves whether we have learned with St. Paul to find in it our great and chief ground for enthusiasm and joy. Is the Cross that in which, in spite of all it cost our Lord, we exult as we exult in nothing else? Has it taught us the love of God? Has it reconciled us to God? Has it lifted us to a life lived not for ourselves but for Him Who for our sakes died and rose again? It cannot be so, unless we desire it to be so. Just as "it takes two to make a quarrel," so it takes two to make a reconciliation. St. Paul, who says so boldly that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself," at once goes on to say: "We are ambassadors, therefore, on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." What shall we say to God as we look up to Him to-day? We shall thank Him surely for the Cross as the revelation of His love. But we shall go further than that. We shall say to Him that, though the mind about our sin, which the Lord expressed in dying for it, is not our mind yet—though we do not yet rightly condemn our sin, or bear with full willingness its punishment, or fully accept God's will as He accepted it—yet we believe that His mind was the right mind, and that we desire to share it. May God take His mind as ours and lead us to share it!

“ Look, Father, look on His Anointed Face,  
And only look on us as found in Him;  
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,  
Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim;  
For lo! between our sins and their reward  
We set the Passion of Thy Son our Lord.”

Finally, we shall pray that the Cross may crucify us, too, to the world, and the world to us, that, dying by it, we may rise through it to that life of service and of power for which God intends us.

## SERMON IX

### THE REVELATION OF THE RISEN LORD

*(Easter Day)*

John xx. 8, 9

“Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, which came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.”

So it was, St. John tells us, that the great truth of our Lord's Resurrection first came to the world. While it was still dark on the first Easter morning, Mary Magdalene went to the holy sepulchre, and saw that the great stone had been rolled away. What had happened? Evidently, she thought, some one had opened the sepulchre, and removed the body of the Lord. She ran to bear the news to St. Peter and St. John, and they in their turn ran to the sepulchre to discover what had taken place. There they saw something—it is not at first plain what it was—which led St. John, though not yet St. Peter, to the right conclusion. “He saw, and believed.” It was not, he tells us, knowledge of the Old Testament which led him to faith; the witness of the Old Testament was not yet understood. It was not the remembrance of the words of the Lord. It was not as yet the appearance of the Risen Lord. It was something which he saw in the sepulchre, which conveyed to him the truth. What was it?

#### I

Let us go with the Apostles to the Lord's sepulchre—our thoughts are quicker than their feet—and see what it is which has come to pass. The sun has risen as we



reach the garden. There is the sepulchre, and yes! it is as Mary has said. We can enter if we will, for the great stone has been rolled away. And we go to the entrance; we stoop and peer into the darkness within; there is the slab of rock, where we remember that the Body was laid. There is something white lying upon it; but the Body?—no, the Lord's Body is no longer there. What has become of it? Is it as Mary said? "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." It may be so; but let us examine the sepulchre. So we stoop our heads once more and pass down into the gloom within; we reach the slab where the Lord's Body was laid. Yes! here are the grave-clothes, and there close by, but not touching the grave-clothes, is the napkin, in which the Lord's Head was wrapped. But now let us look at them, and think a little. If the Romans or the priests have removed the Lord's Body, why did they leave these wrappings behind? But that is not the only difficulty. These wrappings, we see, have not been torn off, and thrown aside; they are exactly as they were left on the evening of Good Friday. Look. The winding-sheet has never been unwound; the napkin is still wrapped together and knotted, and retains the form of the Lord's Head. There on the slab of rock the distance from the winding-sheet to the napkin is the distance which separated the one from the other when the Lord's Body was there. Is it conceivable that any one should have taken off the wrappings and replaced them in this way? It could not have been done so exactly as this. What then has happened? It is amazing, but there seems to be only one explanation. A strange spiritual change must have passed over the Body of the Lord! It has passed out of and away from the wrappings without disturbing them. The winding-sheet has sunk down by its own weight, and the weight of the spices contained in it; the napkin, which was knotted, remains just as it was. The Lord is risen, as He said. We see and believe.

## II

There is surely something wonderfully characteristic of the ways of God in this revelation of our Lord's Resurrection. God's teaching has ever been given to us, not chiefly in words, but chiefly in facts. He may send His prophets to draw our attention to the facts, and to point out what they imply; but the facts are there first, and themselves contain the revelation for those who have the insight to perceive it. God does not intend to make everything easy for us; the blessing of faith is not for the careless and the inattentive; we must have eyes to see and ears to hear, if the Divine revelation is not to pass us by. So it was on the first Easter Day. The Divine revelation lay in the facts, but not all at first perceived it. Mary at first did not look at the facts closely enough; she drew her false conclusion without looking into the tomb at all. St. Peter saw all that St. John saw, but not, it would seem, all that it implied. St. John alone had the insight, which enabled him to see and believe. Do you say that his advantage was only for the moment? Soon the Lord would Himself appear again and again to His disciples, and all doubt would finally pass away. Yes; but it was to His disciples that He appeared, and not to the world. Where faith and love were absent, no revelation of the Lord was given. But there is more than this to say. Do you think that all the Lord's disciples learned the truth as fully through the revelation given to them? Do you think that St. Thomas, who could not be convinced except by touching the Hands and the Side of the Lord, understood His glory as well as St. John? If so, how are we to understand our Lord's words, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"? Surely the long start which St. John had gained on the road to the understanding of the Risen Lord, was never lost; he went faster and further than the other Apostles, and even to the end saw more in the Lord than the rest could see.

So, brethren, it is with us all to-day. If we are indeed to believe in the Resurrection of our Lord, it is the facts which must convince us. Though the Lord has sent the Church to bear witness to His Resurrection, it is to the facts that the Church's appeal is made. We cannot take you to the empty tomb and show you the wrappings lying undisturbed; we cannot give you a vision of the Risen Lord. But we can point you to facts as convincing to those who have eyes to see—the wonderful change which the Resurrection worked upon the Apostles, the joy and power with which they were filled by the Spirit which came forth from the Risen and Ascended Lord, the wonder of the Church's life all down the ages, and of the work which the Lord has enabled us to do for Him, and which He still enables us to do to-day. The Risen Lord is living to-day not merely in that heavenly life which is beyond our gaze; He is living in His Church on earth, manifesting Himself to us in His Church on earth; and if we have not the faith to find Him there, we shall, I fear, find Him nowhere else. The revelation is not for all; it is love, thoughtfulness, and insight that are needed. Let me show you more fully what I mean.

Think for a moment of our soldiers in the Holy Land to-day. What reality must be given to the Bible story by all that they are seeing! There before the eyes of our soldiers are the places of which they heard when they were boys at school, Hebron, Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. But what, after all, do they see? They may see "the place where the Lord lay"; they may see the wrappings undisturbed in which His life was passed; they may learn to picture the scenes of Bible story, as they never could have pictured them, had they stayed in England. But have they come nearer to the Lord by all that they have seen? Not necessarily. The Lord is not there, for He is risen. He has left behind Him far more than the napkin and the winding-sheet. He has passed away from all that belonged to one age and to one people.

"Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more." Where is the Lord nearer, in Palestine or England? Which is the holier land? Is Palestine, as we find it to-day, much more than a vast sepulchre from which life has fled? We may enter in freely; the great stone of the Turkish rule has been rolled away; but though we may see the wrappings of the Lord's earthly life, we shall see little else. In the English village far away, where Sunday by Sunday the Lord's word was preached, and Sunday by Sunday those who loved Him gathered at His altar, the Lord was far nearer to our soldiers than on the dusty highways of Palestine. In the purity, the charity, the humility of His people, He revealed Himself far more clearly than by the outward scenes in which His life was passed. How should those who had not found Him here find Him there?

So, be sure, it is with ourselves. We need not cross the seas; we need not go back in thought two thousand years to find the Risen Lord. By His Spirit He is with us always, even to the end of the world; where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there is He in the midst of us. He has come to us at His altar this morning to make Himself known to us in the breaking of bread. Did we find Him there? If we did, we have a greater proof that the Lord has risen indeed than any which Palestine could give to us. If we did not, if we have never found Him, for us He might as well be in the sepulchre still.

### III

Brethren, when shall we find Him if not now? Ought we not to feel, as year by year Easter comes round, that the forty days of Easter should be to us just as fruitful as the forty days of Lent? All this last week we have been thinking of our Lord in His Passion; we have watched with Him as the man of sorrows. But our Lord is not only the man of sorrows; He is the man

of joy; for the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame; and just as in the Passion He reveals to us the depth of human sorrow, so in His glory He reveals to us the height of human joy. Will not our religion be a sad and gloomy religion, if we keep our Lent and not our Easter? If forty days are not too much for the one, are they too much for the other? How much we might all learn if we would dwell as much upon the story of the appearances of the Risen Lord as we dwell upon those narratives of suffering which have gone before it! Too often in Holy Week we try to suffer with Christ, and then at Easter abandon ourselves once more almost wholly to the life of the world. Should we not try to enter into that higher joy which belongs to our Lord, and which He can give to us? We have begun to-day with the empty tomb. Dwell upon it in your own thoughts; see what it means. But do not be satisfied unless this Easter the Lord Himself is revealed to you, and you know by experience that He is risen from the dead. Seek Him day by day; pray for His revelation; fulfil the conditions which He lays down. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him."



SERMON X

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

(*Low Sunday*)

1 Cor. xv. 54-57

“ Then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

THERE are, brethren, in all Scripture few grander words than these. St. Paul, like Isaiah, whose words he quotes, is looking forward to the final triumph of the people of God. Then it will be that the victory which God gives us through our Lord Jesus Christ will be completed by the resurrection, or, if death has not yet claimed us, by the transformation of the body. Death, now our conqueror, will itself be conquered; all that it has stolen it will have to restore. The victory which our Lord has won for us is a victory which penetrates to every part of our being. In this present world, it is true, it is the soul that experiences the Lord's redemption rather than the body, but it will not always be so. When the kingdom of God has fully come, the body will be redeemed also.

I

I would speak to you this morning of the resurrection of the body, that great truth which was brought before us in our second lesson. Do we not all need to think about it more than at present we do? With most of

us, I think, the truths of our faith fall into three classes. There are the truths, firstly, of which we have a living hold, and in the power of which our lives are lived from day to day. There are the truths, secondly, which we accept with an undoubting faith, but which we have not yet sufficiently made our own to gain from them the strength which they are able to afford us. And then, thirdly, there are the truths which, as Christians, we suppose that we believe, but which present so much difficulty to our minds, that we prefer to think about them as little as we may. In which of these three classes should we place the truth of the resurrection of the body? Very few of us, I think, would place it in the first, while very many of us would place it in the third. At the bottom of our hearts, many of us are inclined to think that the Christian faith would be the better if it were rid of it. We believe with undoubting faith in a future life, but we would rather think of it as a life for the soul, and not as a life for both the soul and the body.

Now, my brothers, I want to convince you this morning, not only that that view of the future life is not the Christian view, but that we may all thank God that it is not. I want to show you that the full Christian doctrine is the only doctrine which will satisfy the deepest instincts and longings of our souls; I want to guard it from the misunderstandings which make it difficult to believe, to show you on what it rests, and what we ourselves must do if we would attain to that future which it sets before us. May I ask, then, for your attention to these points one by one? What a boon it will be to us, if we can promote this truth from the third class to the second, or even from the third or the second to the first!

## II

Let me urge then, firstly, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is the doctrine which alone will satisfy the instincts and longings of our nature.

“ The wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have,  
The likest God within the soul ? ”

May we not apply those words, not only to the universe, but to the individual man? What we instinctively demand is not merely the immortality of a shadowy something which we call the soul; it is our immortality as living wholes, the immortality of the men and women whom we know and love. Let us take an example. What was it for which the heart of the widow of Nain was crying out, when the Lord met her? It was for her son—not for the soul of her son, but for her son as she had known and loved him. She was sobbing, as any mother will tell you, because the son whom she had borne, and carried as a child in her arms, was lying dead, and she must put him away, and leave him in a dark horrible cavern on the mountain-side. It was not his soul for which she was crying out; like every right-thinking daughter of Israel, she would have rejected with horror the thought of holding converse with that; what she wanted was her son. And, when the Lord came and spoke to the dead body on the bier as her son, when He said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise, and “ he that was dead sat up, and began to speak,” our Lord did the one and only thing which could dry her tears.

Now, my brothers, in this we are all at one with the widow of Nain. We do not love souls, but men and women; we love our dear ones as living wholes, their spirits smiling out upon us through their bodies, and their bodies manifesting all the beauty and sweetness of their souls; and, when that hideous scorpion death comes with his sting, and slays their bodies, it is to their bodies that we chiefly cling. Think of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, when David had given up her children to death for their father’s sin, spreading her sackcloth on the rock, and watching by them night and day lest the foul vultures should tear them. Think of St. Mary Magdalene at the tomb of the Lord, as she cries out

" They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." It is the loved form of her Master that she longs to receive into her arms, and bear away. There you see the heart of man, as in truth it is. And if our Lord had but promised that we should continue to live in the unseen world, His words would have brought but little satisfaction to mother, or wife, or lover. What we desire is the resurrection of the body,

" The touch of the vanished hand,  
And the sound of the voice that is still."

The immortality of the soul may be enough for Greek philosophers; it is from them, and not from the revelation recorded in Scripture, that that belief has come; but when death has robbed us of our dear ones, we need far more than that. Victory over death means receiving back from death the bodies which he slew, not the survival of the souls which he never attempted to slay; the immortality of the soul is no victory over death at all.

You see then, I hope, that the resurrection of the body is what we all desire. Now let us consider what the Christian doctrine is, and how we are to deal with the difficulties which it presents to our minds. No doubt those difficulties are real. The questions, " How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? " are very natural questions. It is not only that imagination may " trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole "; it is that the materials of which our present bodies are composed will after our death still have their place and their use in the world, and may even come to be contained in the bodies of others. Such a resurrection of the flesh as that in which many Christians have believed, a resurrection to be brought about by the re-gathering of all the materials of our present bodies, seems plainly out of the question. If, however, we look carefully at the words of St. Paul in our second lesson this morning

we shall see that he has no such expectation as this. Evidently he regards the body of the future as having a different character from that of the present body. The bodies which will be ours after the resurrection will be "spiritual" bodies, bodies fitted for the glorious activities of the kingdom of God. But this will not render them less truly our own than our present bodies, or less truly constitutive of those real full selves, which our friends know and love. "Go," St. Paul would say to us, "out into the country, and look at the waving fields of corn. The seeds of wheat and barley and oats, which the farmer sowed are no longer to be found, but the harvest corresponds to the seed. Where he sowed wheat, there is now wheat; where he sowed barley, there is now barley; where he sowed oats, there are now oats. God has given to the farmer what he sowed, only far more abundantly. So it will be at the resurrection. The bodies which will then be ours will not be materially the same as the bodies which are ours to-day, but they will correspond with them; we ourselves in our complete humanity will live again." Do we object that in the seed there is a germ of life, which accounts for the plant which comes out of it, while in the dead body there is nothing of this kind? That surely is no sound objection to St. Paul's analogy. We know nothing of any germ of life in either case; the real relation between the present reality and that which is given to take its place escapes us: St. Paul says nothing of any germ of life. His point is that death and dissolution in each case are necessary, in order that the more abundant life may follow, and in each case he looks simply to the power of God for the desired issue. "God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own." And in so teaching St. Paul simply follows his Master Christ. "Ye do err," said our Lord to the Sadducees, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God." The resurrection of the body does not depend, as far as our knowledge goes, upon any germ of life; the links between the present and the future are here beyond



our ken ; our faith rests upon the Divine promise, and our certainty that what He has promised He is most surely able to perform. It may be that it is the individuality of the soul which gives to the body a corresponding individuality ;

“ For of the soul the body form doth take,  
For soul is form and doth the body make.”

Even here, as the years go on, the soul stamps itself more and more upon the body. Pride, ill-temper, moral weakness on the one hand—gentleness, kindness, moral strength on the other—become clearly legible in the body. In the body of the resurrection will not this be more completely so ? It may be that there is some other connection between the present and the future which is unknown to us. All this we may surely learn in the larger knowledge of the future. What we need is the assurance that we all in the fullness of our humanity will live again, and that assurance is ours. The longings of our hearts will be fully satisfied with that.

### III

Finally, on what does our belief rest, and how may we ourselves attain to the glorious future which may be ours ? Brethren, St. Paul believed in the resurrection of the body long before he became a Christian ; but, when he became one, he found, not only his old belief confirmed and illuminated, but a new and safe path opened to all that it promised.

How did the Hebrews come to believe in the resurrection ? They came to it through their belief in God, their certainty of the coming of His kingdom. The kingdom tarried long. Generation after generation of the saints of God longed for it, lived for it, in the darkest days suffered and died for it, and yet it did not come. They “ all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar.” What then of their future ? Could any one with a living

faith suppose that when the kingdom came, it would be for those only who were alive to welcome it, while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—Moses and Elijah—Isaiah and Jeremiah—the heroes and saints of old who had lived for God and died for God—would be shut out? Not for a moment could they believe that. Rather, as our Lord told the Sadducees, when God entered into covenant with them, and called Himself their God, He pledged Himself to raise them from the dead to share in it. So faith in the resurrection came slowly but surely to the people of God; St. Paul brought it with him when he entered the Church of Christ. Ah! but how his faith was confirmed and illuminated when he learned of the resurrection of our Lord! Our Lord, like the saints of old, had died for the kingdom of God. But He was not waiting for the final consummation as they were waiting; already He was risen, the first-fruits of them that slept, and in Him His servants had learned how they too should rise. Whence, brethren, does St. Paul draw his description of the body of the resurrection? How does he know that there are celestial bodies, as well as bodies terrestrial? How does he know that the body of the future will be a spiritual body—a body of incorruption, glory, and power? He knows it, because he knows from the witness of the elder Apostles what the body of the Risen Lord had been. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." And, brethren, if we would rise with bodies glorious like the Lord's, it must be by faithful adherence to Him Who has already been glorified; so that His spirit may continually be ours for the quickening of our souls now, and the raising of our bodies when His kingdom comes. Day by day we must receive His life; day by day we must use the life given to us in His service; we must be 'stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord."

## SERMON XI

### THE GOOD SHEPHERD

*(The Second Sunday after Easter)*

John x. 11

“ I am the good shepherd.”

THERE is something strange at first sight about the Gospel for to-day. We are still in Easter-tide, and yet the Gospel, and indeed the Collect and Epistle also, seem to have but little to do with Easter. We are brought back in all alike to the thought of our Lord's example, of our Lord's self-sacrifice. And yet surely all this is not so inappropriate as it seems. We do not need to stay long over the outward facts of our Lord's Resurrection. We need to think of our Lord in His relation to ourselves to-day, of how He stands towards us, and of how we must stand towards Him. What is the risen Lord to us to-day? Well! that is a large question. But to-day's Gospel begins the answer, “ I am the good shepherd.”

#### I

“ The good shepherd ”—how well we know that title of our Lord Jesus Christ ! But do we understand all that it includes? Very gentle are the thoughts that we associate with it; we think of the shepherd's care, the shepherd's pasturing, the shepherd's search after the lost. All these are true and good thoughts; but they are not the only, or perhaps the chief ones; they are not the thoughts which stand out prominently

in to-day's Gospel. Here, as elsewhere, we are apt to soften too much the picture of our Lord. We retain the sweetness, but we forget the majesty. It is the shepherd's rule, the shepherd's knowledge, the shepherd's courage and self-sacrifice of which we must think to-day. The good shepherd is not a thought for children only; it is a thought for strong and wise men also, for those above all who bear rule over others.

The first thought that our Lord here sets before us is that He is the owner, the ruler of the sheep. We need to dwell on this, because modern ideas mislead us. In our own country to-day the shepherd is seldom the man to whom the sheep belong. Even here no doubt the shepherd has a most responsible post; it is a great thing to be a good shepherd; but almost always he is not the master, but a hired servant. In the ancient world it was not so. The good shepherd was the good sheep-master. So it is that in Holy Scripture—and indeed in Homer also—the thought of the shepherd is associated with rule and dignity. In the Old Testament, just as in Homer, the “shepherds of the people” do not mean their priests or teachers, but their princes and kings. So, in the New Testament, when the Risen Lord said to St. Peter, “Shepherd my sheep,” He gave him, surely, a commission to rule as well as to feed. So it is here. Our Lord, the good Shepherd, contrasts Himself with the hireling, “whose own the sheep are not.” In calling Himself our Shepherd, He claims to be also our Master and our King. That very care and self-sacrifice for us, on which we so often dwell, do not rest only on the love and pity of the Lord; they rest also upon His ownership, upon the fact that the loss of us would be a real loss to Him. Brethren, do you grasp this? Jesus is our Shepherd, but the Shepherd is the Lord and Master. “Ye call me, Master, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.” That is the fundamental relation that He bears to us. Our Lord appeals to us, just as He appealed to the Apostles, in the first instance as our Master, as the One

Who owns us, and demands our absolute obedience. "Follow me." "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Brethren, are we responding to that claim? If not, how can we claim the shepherd's care, or the shepherd's pasturing?

That, then, is the first characteristic of the shepherd—His authority. And the second is His knowledge: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." That is a real characteristic of the shepherd also—the individual knowledge that he has of the sheep. Sheep to our eyes seem all much alike, but it is not so to the shepherd. Every face is known. Yes! and it is mutual knowledge. The sheep know their shepherd as they know no one else. All this our Lord claims for Himself. The knowledge—the mutual knowledge—of which He speaks is the highest possible. Read the passage in the Revised Version, and you will see this: "I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." The mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son—it is to this that our Lord compares the mutual knowledge of Himself and His people. That, too, we must remember, if we would understand the good shepherd. The Lord is not merely the shepherd of the flock; He is "the shepherd of the sheep." Each one of us, with all his circumstances, all his successes, all his failures and sins, is personally known to Him. To each one of us, so far as we are capable of it, He is ready personally to reveal Himself. And you see how this transforms that thought of the shepherd's authority with which we began. On the one hand, it makes our Lord's claim far more penetrating. It is not just a claim for a general obedience to general rules and principles. It is the claim of One Who knows us, and therefore has a will of His own for every detail of our lives. It is the remembrance of our Lord's perfect knowledge that brings the voice of



Jesus near. It becomes a voice that says, "Do this," "Do that"—that settles for us our hours of sleep and work and social intercourse, the details of our business and of our home life, the work that we are to do for Him, and the way in which that work is to be done. And yet, on the other hand, it is the thought of our Lord's knowledge which gives us confidence. We see that the claim He makes is a considered claim. It is the claim of One who knows what is really best, Who never asks what is impossible, Who pledges Himself to our ultimate success, if we will but follow Him. What confidence that gives! Authority is easy to bear, when it is one with knowledge, and one with love. Still more, it is easy to bear, as we come to know our Master, as well as to remember that He knows us : for then we enter into His mind ; we see the purpose of His commands, and obey from sympathy with His purposes. "Henceforth," He says, "I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you." Obedience is asked still, but it is no blind obedience ; it is the obedience of those who know and understand what their lord is doing.

Authority, knowledge—yes ! but courage and self-sacrifice too. That is the crowning thought—"the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And here, too, if we would understand our Lord's words, we must go back in thought to the ancient world. The shepherd's work is safe enough in England, lonely as it sometimes is. There are no wild beasts prowling round, no robbers to steal or to destroy. It was not so of old—not so with Moses in the wilderness of Midian, or with David in the rough country round Bethlehem. The shepherd's life was a life of danger, of self-sacrifice. Many a time outside his lonely cot, would the shepherd be found dead, and mangled, for he had given his life for the sheep. So it was with our Lord Jesus Christ. Just because He was the

shepherd, He was called to die. The Apostles, the sheep, were safe; He was not. It was so all through His ministry. "When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing." It was so even to the last. "I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, Of those which Thou gavest me, have I lost none." All the world's hostility was gathered into Himself; He broke the power of evil, like the Swiss hero of old broke the Austrian line, by gathering the spear points into His body, and falling upon them. And we, brethren, as we think of our Good Shepherd to-day, and the claim that He makes upon us, must ever remember that it is the claim of One Who has given His life for the sheep, Who has faced our enemies as the true shepherd and master should, and by death overcome them. If His claim be great, it is a claim that He has a right to make, and which we may not reject.

## II

You see then who is the Good Shepherd. He is the One in whom meet perfect authority, perfect knowledge, and perfect love. But we must not stop short there. Our Lord is not only our Master and Saviour; He is also our example. The Good Shepherd is the type of what every one of us ought to be who is called, as He was, to exercise authority over his fellow-men. It matters not what the authority may be. It may be that of the king over his subjects, of the father over his family, of the mistress over her servants, of the employer over the employés in his factory or shop, of the master or the teacher over the children committed to him. All are called to be good shepherds, to exercise their authority even as our Lord exercised His. What does this say to us all?

It says to us, firstly, Take seriously that great word

"authority." Have nothing to do with modern denials of it. Authority, brethren, is a real thing. We are really given it, really responsible for our use of it. Never claim authority, where you do not possess it; never allow it to be set at nought, where you do. Authority is one of the mainstays of human society. Wherever, in the family, in the state, in the church, it is not recognised, there can be no peace, no strength, no permanence. Do not suppose, when your authority is set at nought, that the evil can be set right, by ceasing to claim it, or to enforce your claim. It is a thing of which you cannot divest yourself. If you attempt to do so, you make yourself responsible for all the evil that you do not check or prevent. Remember those stern words spoken to Eli: "I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." No one was kinder, or gentler than St. Paul, when his authority was recognised; no one stronger, or more determined, when it was not. "I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some." "I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare." There, brethren, speaks the voice of God-given authority. Where it is necessary, let us make it our own.

Yes! but let us exercise it with knowledge, let us exercise it with self-sacrificing love. Knowledge—yes, and mutual knowledge—is necessary, if the claim to authority is to be gladly borne. It is hard for us all to give up our wills to others; it is only tolerable, when those who give us orders are those who know and love us, and whom we love and know. I say to you, my brothers, that the calls that God has given you to exercise authority, are calls to seek after knowledge of others, calls to let yourselves be known. Just in so far as you give orders, you must seek to know those to whom you give them. In your homes, in your

business, you are bound to take a real personal interest in all that are under you; you are bound to remember that they are not machines, but real human beings, lads and girls like your own sons and daughters, with characters, thoughts, desires, purposes of their own, to which you must pay attention. Your claims must be considered claims, like the Lord's claims upon you; you must know what you ask, and not ask the impossible, or the degrading, or the harmful; you must make it easy to obey. More than this, you must reveal yourself, let yourself be known, as the Lord does. You are not, with your servants, or with your employés, to surround yourself with a ring-fence of imaginary dignity, to speak from a pedestal like a being of another world. You are not of another world; you are of the same world, and you must be approachable. You must try to rule by love; you must let others see that your demands are reasonable; you must use the language of common politeness. Do not say that it would not be appreciated or understood. People do not understand our rudeness; but they would find no difficulty in understanding our courtesy.

Yes! and once more, remember that just in so far as you have authority over others, you must be ready, like the shepherd, to sacrifice yourself for them. You must be on the watch for every danger, moral or physical, that assails them; you must be ready, if the need call you, to interpose yourself between it and them. Ah! we shall never wish to rule, if we know what it involves. Just in so far as we find authority a pleasant thing, we may be sure that we are as yet unfit to exercise it. How wonderfully again and again Shakespeare teaches us this! Remember how King Henry IV contrasts the calm sleep of the ship-boy amid the roaring of the sea with the care and the sleeplessness of the king "in the calmest and most stillest night."

"Then happy love-lie-down,  
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

Remember, again, King Henry V on the eve of Agincourt.

“ Upon the king ! let us our lives, our souls,  
Our debts, our careful wives,  
Our children, and our sins, lay on the king :  
We must bear all.  
O hard condition ! twin-born with greatness.”

Yes ! it is ever so. There is no authority without the call to sacrifice. “ The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

### III

And how shall you and I, with our weakness and selfishness, bear this burden which God places upon us ? There is but one way. We must claim and accept the authority, the knowledge, the love of Christ for ourselves, and then we shall be able to exercise the like with other people. It is an old saying that if we wish to command, we must first learn to obey. I think we shall find, if we look back over history, that it is those men, who have been most penetrated with the sense of the implicit allegiance which they owe to God themselves, who have most successfully exercised authority over other men. There is no hardship in obeying a man, who, we feel, himself but lives to obey, who knows that he also has a Master in heaven Who is no respecter of persons, and will see justice done at last alike to the highest and the lowest. Listen, brethren, to that penetrating voice of Jesus, which claims in great things and small your absolute obedience ; think often of His knowledge of you, of the love that He so great has shown to us so small and weak ; and then you will not find it so difficult to act in His Spirit and His Name towards those with whom you yourself are charged. “ I also am a man under authority,” and therefore, with no pride or arrogance, but with a deep sense of my responsibility, “ I say unto this man, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.”



## SERMON XII

### THE LAW OF SACRIFICE

*(The Fourth Sunday after Easter)*

Luke xxiv. 29

“ Abide with us : for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent.”

THESE words of the disciples have surely a beauty which is all their own. Each of us may give to them his own meaning, but each of us with one meaning or another will wish to speak them to our Risen Lord. “ Abide with us.” They are words for this part of the Christian Year, when the Easter season is drawing to its close. Though Easter passes, the Risen Lord does not pass; our faith and love must constrain Him to abide with us through all the days to come. They are words again for the great crises of human history, when, as to-day, one age of the world seems to be reaching its conclusion, and we know not what the future may bring. “ Abide with us.” Though much changes, the Risen Lord does not change; He will be with us through the night to the dawn that will follow it. Once more, they are words which have a meaning for our individual lives—words especially for the old and the dying.

“ Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.”

#### I

But, brethren, we should not be satisfied just to give to the words a meaning of our own. Here, as so often, the words of Scripture, though full of suggestion

for the imagination, yield their best teaching when we take them in their true and proper sense. On the lips of the disciples these words were not words of prayer. They were words of frank Eastern hospitality, spoken by men who had a home of their own to a mysterious stranger who seemed to have none. Very great has been the value of the stranger's teaching, very wonderful the light which he had thrown upon all that had caused them sorrow, and disturbed their faith in God. If he had so served them, they must serve him; at least they will offer him a meal and a bed before he goes upon his way. How wonderful was the result of that invitation! It was not merely that the guest became the host, and that the Lord was revealed to them in the breaking of bread; it was that, when He indeed "went further," they were led to go further after Him. "They rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together. . . . And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them." Moreover, we may be sure that it was not once only that they told their story; the Lord's pupils and guests became the Lord's evangelists, and "went everywhere preaching the word." Shall we follow them in our thoughts to-day, and in our practice afterwards? We need, as we shall see, the teaching which they received, and, having grasped it, we shall offer their invitation. But we shall offer it, as they did, not just that the Lord may serve us, but that we may serve Him; not that we may keep Him to ourselves, but that we may be led to go further with Him to His work in the world.

## II

Now, brethren, do we understand the Risen Lord's teaching? "They stood still"—so we read in the Revised Version of St. Luke's Gospel—"looking sad." Why were they sad? It was because they had been full of confidence, and their confidence had been

disappointed. Let us consider what their hopes had been.

What, let us first ask, was that people of Israel to which they belonged? It was, firstly, a nation, and it was, secondly, the Church of God. Firstly, it was a nation, one among the many nations of the world. It had its national life, its national interests, its national ambitions. At its best it was the noblest of the nations; at its worst, it could fall at least as low as the nations around it. But whether at its best or at its worst, it inspired its sons with a marvellous patriotism, fruitful in some of the most heroic deeds which the world has known. But Israel was more than this. Israel was the Church of God, the people, upon whom God's purpose rested. They were meant to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the sacred school, as St. Athanasius says, of the knowledge of God and the spiritual life. In a word, they were to be in life and in word the missionary nation, living not for themselves, but for God and the world which needed them. Now the tragedy of Israel lay here. The people thought more of their national position than they thought of their missionary calling. They confused Israel after the flesh with Israel after the spirit. They thought of themselves not as God's labourers, but as His favourites, heirs of a kingdom they were doing little to win. They thought that God's promises were given to them not as a missionary people, but as one of the nations of the world, and that He was with them, not to carry out His own purposes, but to carry out theirs. Moreover, their error did not end here. Misunderstanding God's purpose for themselves, they misunderstood His purpose for their Messiah also. They thought that the redemption He would bring would be a material rather than a spiritual redemption. They looked for Him as a great soldier, washing his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly, not as a man of sorrows or as the bearer of the world's sin. So it was that when the Lord came

to His own, His own received Him not, and that to those who had believed on Him Calvary seemed the end of all their hopes. Now it was just from this error that the mysterious Stranger delivered the two disciples. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" The Lord came not to condemn and crucify the world, but to be condemned and crucified by it. He came to be the ear of wheat that should fall into the ground and die, and so bring forth much fruit. He came that, having died, He might rise to the new life, in which He would bestow the Spirit. Suppose that the Lord's redemption had been the redemption which His nation desired. Suppose that He had overthrown the Roman power, and made Israel the lords of the world. What would the result have been? Not only would the national pride of Israel have been greater than ever, but also their unfitness for their missionary calling. But how was it with the true redemption—that redemption which brought the gift of the Spirit? It filled those who received it with all that they required for a world-wide activity; it gave to them new life, and light, and power, and love; it made them, indeed, a missionary people, and so fulfilled God's purpose for them, and not their own for themselves.

My brothers, you anticipate the application. Indeed it leaps to the eye. We ourselves to-day, with our world-wide task before us, are standing still, looking sad; and we are doing so because we have been guilty of the same error, and are suffering a like disappointment. We too have cared more for our national life than for our missionary calling. We too have confused God's purposes with our own. We too have even identified our cause with God's cause, and God's victory with ours. Thus, these last four years, our faith has ebbed and flowed with the fortunes of the war, and been at the mercy of the daily newspaper. Do not misunderstand me. England is not Israel.

England is but one among many nations, to whom the word of God has come. But England is fighting for truth and right to-day; so far as her motives are pure, she is fighting for God. We pray for her continually in all good conscience; we long passionately for her victory; in spite of all our disappointments, our hopes are still high. But do not let us speak as if the truth of God were pledged to our success, or as if our faith in Him could not survive defeat. History shows us that the cause of right, when it was merely a question of material victory, has often gone down before the cause of wrong. Moral forces count for much in national conflicts, but they do not always prevail. Do we wonder that in God's world it should be so? Should we like the Octave of St. George to be marked by the arrival of twelve legions of angels for the Western Front? The Ascended Lord might pray the Father for that, but how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled? I cannot myself altogether identify the cause of my country with the cause of Christ; the web of human motive is too complex for that. But the more of Christ, the more of His Cross. If I did absolutely identify the cause of Christ with the cause of England, in view of Calvary I should expect not material victory, but material defeat, with a resurrection, not material but spiritual, beyond it. But the great victories of God, which bring His kingdom nearer, are never material victories; they are won by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Here in the day of our Messiah's power He conquers His enemies not by destroying them, but by making them His friends; He wills not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; He overcomes evil with good. His cause is the cause of His people willing in the day of His power, His people who are ready to follow Him whithersoever He goeth, in bold witness and in patient suffering. In His world-wide activity He summons them always to go farther with Him; He summons them even to-day. If at our



missionary festival we are asked, "What mean ye by this service? Why talk of missions when all we hold dear is at stake?" we answer, "All we hold dear is not at stake; our life is hid with Christ in God." The far-flung battle-line of our missions matters even more to the world than our line in Flanders and in France. Always, even to-day, we lift high Christ's royal banner; it must not suffer loss. Material failure may be God's will for us, as for His Son, though we do not think so. If it be, He can turn it into gain. But it cannot be God's will that we should abandon our missionary task, just when the opportunities are greatest. Victory is certain, if we persevere. Like the Roman senator after Cannæ, we will buy the land where the enemy is encamped by our prayer and sacrifice; one day it will be Christ's and ours.

#### IV

My brothers, these thoughts may be unfamiliar to you; perhaps they are also unwelcome. Do not think that I speak in any fancied superiority. Indeed it is not so: "I am as ye are." I too, I fear, love my country better than the purpose of God; there are times when anxiety makes it hard to sleep. But I do not think that my anxiety is worthy of one who looks for his salvation to the Cross of Christ; I believe that I should be stronger for my country, as well as happier could I lay it aside. What ought we to do? We should pray, as our Collect teaches us to pray, that we may love the thing which God commands, and desire that which He promises, that so our hearts may be fixed where true joys are to be found. We know what He commands; it is that we should go into all the world, and preach the Gospel. We know what He promises; it is that the kingdoms of the world shall one day be His. We must learn to love the one, and to desire the other. It is hard sometimes to bear the silence of God. "Hold not Thy tongue, O God, keep

not still silence; refrain not Thyself, O God. For lo, Thine enemies make a murmuring; and they that hate Thee have lift up their head." So we cry, and He seems not to answer. But what does His silence mean? Is it the silence of the careless, the silence of the impotent, or the silence of the strong? Is it that He cares not that we perish, or cannot hinder it? Is it not rather the silence of One, Who, as our Lord said, has worked up till now, is working still, and whose purpose through all the changes of the world is being worked out as fast as our wilfulness allows? Our part is to work for and with Him everywhere—in the cause of the nation and of the Church too—knowing that no loyal sacrifice will be ultimately in vain, but that by it we, like our Lord, enter into our glory. If our country calls us to go with it one mile, we will go with it twain. If to some of us our share in the national warfare seems but small, we must do the more by prayer and effort in the spiritual. We will pray the Lord to abide with us to-day for His ends even more than for our own, that we may go further with Him, till all the world has heard His Name.

## SERMON XIII

### PREVAILING PRAYER

*(Rogation Sunday)*

John xvi. 23, 24

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled."

WHICH of us, brethren, who hears and believes these words, does not feel a sense of shame? Here we have our Lord putting into our hands a magnificent power. We have but to ask the Father in His name, and there is nothing that the Father will not give to us. And what use have we made of this power all these years? We have prayed, no doubt; many of us know by experience the blessing that prayer can bring. Yet how little we have gained by it either for ourselves, or for others! Instead of our lives being filled with joy by the answers we have received, many of us take life almost as sadly as those who never pray. Thank God, it is not too late for a fresh beginning in prayer. Our Lord spoke these words to men who had failed as we have failed. "Hitherto," He said, "have ye asked nothing in my name." The Apostles, like us, had prayed, but not in the right way, and so little blessing had come to them by their prayers. The Lord told them to begin again: "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

#### I

So, then, to-day we will think of Christian prayer, prayer in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christian

prayer is not the only kind of prayer. We can pray in our own names; and it is far better so to pray than not to pray at all. God will hear the words we speak before Him, whatever they may be. There is not a heathen who cries out to the unknown God, but our Father listens to him; and if that is true of the heathen, it is true abundantly of you and of me. It may seem to you, as I try to speak of Christian prayer to-day, that Christian prayer is a very difficult thing. It is not so, if we rely upon the Spirit of God; but it is a thousand times better to pray as the heathen pray, than not to pray at all. Only prayer of that kind has not the power of Christian prayer. It may calm and relieve our spirits, and that is good; it may help us to keep God in our thoughts, and that is better; but it makes very little difference to what is going on in the world. And the reason is this: the object of heathen prayer is to induce God to do what we ourselves would like to see done; and a great number of our desires are both foolish and selfish, and quite inconsistent with what other people desire. Our Father loves us far too well to promise that whatever we ask in our own name He will give to us. That would mean guiding the world, not by His own wisdom, but by our folly. With Christian prayer it is altogether otherwise. The purpose of it is not to have our own will done, but to have God's will done. There is nothing selfish about it, nothing contrary to the interests of any one in the world. God can promise to hear it, and give us whatever we ask, because by promising this He only promises to do what He longs to do. The more that He answers Christian prayers, the more His kingdom will come and His will be done; the more we shall all advance towards our true blessedness.

## II

Now, my brethren, let us try more fully to understand all this. What is it to pray in the name of our

Lord Jesus Christ? Is it just to end our prayers with the words "through Jesus Christ our Lord"? Very right it is that we should so end our prayers, though, as the Lord's Prayer teaches us, it is by no means necessary. But those words have no power to turn a selfish heathen prayer into a Christian prayer; rather the very fact that we are going to end with those words should make us careful how we pray. To pray in the name of Christ is to pray in view of what our Lord is and has been found to be; it is to pray as those who are not only His servants but His members, as those who share His mind and heart, and desire to have no will but His.

How was it with the Apostles? Useless it would have been for the Lord to tell them to pray in His name, when first He called them to His service, for then they did not know His name, or what it implied; but it was not useless now, after the years they had spent with Him. For what had they seen? They had seen One Who believed that the Father had a great purpose to be carried out in the world, and that He Himself was the chosen instrument of its fulfilment. They had seen One Who lived but to do the Father's will, One Who said that His meat—the very thing that kept Him alive—was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. They had seen that that work was a redeeming work, a work to deliver the world from its pain, its sorrow, its darkness, and its sin, and make it what it was meant to be, the kingdom of God; and that, in carrying on this work, the Lord shrank from no danger, no suffering, no, not even from death itself. When the Lord had prayed, how had He prayed? Could the Apostles have had any doubt about that? It is true that they might scarcely ever have heard Him pray; the Lord, as a rule, seems to have prayed alone. But could they for a moment have doubted that the purpose of His prayers, like the purpose of His life, was the doing of His Father's will? Could they have thought of



Him as praying, as they might have prayed, for advancement in this world? When the people wished to make Him a king, He left them and withdrew into the mountains. Could they have thought of Him as praying for wealth? He said that a man's life did not consist in the multitude of the things that he possessed. Could they have thought of Him as praying for the overthrow of His personal enemies? When two of them wished to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, the Lord told them that they knew not what spirit they were of. Could they have thought of Him even as praying for deliverance from the Cross, if that would mean the abandonment of His task? The Lord had never shrunk from suffering; He would finish as He had begun. Though they might seldom have heard the Lord pray, they would have known what the character of His prayers must be. And now that the Lord was going to the Father, and leaving them in the power of His Spirit to carry on His work, how could they pray but as He had prayed? Just as their lives were to be given to forwarding God's purpose in the world, so their prayers were to be given also. Just as they were to deny themselves, to count themselves and their own interests and pleasures as nothing in their daily lives, so they were to deny themselves in their daily prayers. They were not to pray in their own names, just as Peter, or John, or Andrew, interested each in his own concerns, but as the members and servants of the ascended Lord, seeking not their own will, but His and His Father's will. Then the Father would hear them as He had heard the Lord; they would ask and receive, and their joy would be full.

### III

You see then, brethren, what Christian prayer is. It is not a means of getting our own will done—that is what the heathen suppose it to be. It is a means—the greatest means we have—of getting God's will

done, of forwarding His purpose for the world. We must forward that purpose, no doubt, by our own labour; if we do not work for the accomplishment of God's will, we cannot acceptably pray for it. But by prayer we can forward God's purpose far more widely; we can reach those whom our activity would never reach; we can be a means of blessing to those whom we have never seen, and in this world will never see. May we not believe that one great reason why God gives in answer to our prayers what He would not give without them, is that His children may take their share in all that He is doing? That is the true Father's way. He would rather go slowly with His children, than go rapidly while putting them aside. The great need is that we should pray in the Lord's name. How, then, shall we seek to do so?

Brethren, the first thing necessary is a converted will. The reason why we fail to pray in the name of Christ is that we care so much for the fulfilment of our own purposes, and so little for the fulfilment of God's. It is this that we must alter. We must deliberately set ourselves to pray—not for what we ourselves desire, but for what we believe that God desires. Do not suppose that our prayer is useless, unless we feel a deep longing that it should be answered. I doubt if there is a greater mistake made about prayer, than the mistake of supposing that its power depends upon our emotional earnestness. The power of our prayer depends upon our faith and perseverance; and we cannot rightly exercise either faith or perseverance unless our prayers are in accordance with the mind of God. We may offer selfish prayers with the most passionate earnestness, and be but like birds beating our wings against the bars of our cage. We may offer an unselfish prayer, simply because it is God's will that we should offer it, and that prayer may be full of power. If you know not how to pray, use the prayers of the Church

—especially the Lord's Prayer; you can apply the Lord's Prayer to every need of yourselves and others. Never mind though the prayers of the Church do not seem to express your own personal wishes; they are meant to express not your desires, but our Lord's. Remember that if your prayer is to be with power, His mind must become your mind. Use the prayers which express His mind, and put into them the best and fullest meaning that you can.

The second thing needed is an illuminated mind. "Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." The ordinary prayers of the Church do not, and cannot, enter into details. We can only pray about details in the name of Christ, as the Spirit of God enables us to see in detail what God's will must be. I think you will notice two things, if you read the lives of the saints. In the first place, they do pray for definite and detailed blessings, both for themselves and for others, and they receive definite and detailed answers to their prayers. But, in the second place, they do not pray for definite and detailed blessings, even though they may be asked to do so, unless they believe that the Spirit of God is leading them to pray for them, or they are able to see how the bestowal of these blessings will forward the purpose of God. So surely it should be with ourselves. Two things are necessary, if we are to pray well. In the first place, we must seek to grow in understanding of the ways of God, and of the real, not the fancied, needs of ourselves and of those about us. In the second place, we must ever seek for the help of the Holy Spirit—not merely to give life and power to the prayers we offer, but also to inspire us to pray for the right things and the right people. Do not, when you kneel down, be in too great a hurry to pray. Ask for the Holy Spirit, and wait upon His guidance and inspiration. Then you will be able to "ask in faith, nothing wavering"; you will ask, and you will receive, and your joy will be full.

Lastly, remember that prayer in the name of Christ is not merely prayer that is like the prayer of our Lord; it is prayer that we offer with Christ and that He offers with us. Why is it that to all Catholic Christians the prayer that we offer at the Holy Eucharist seems the highest and best of all prayer? It is not that the presence of our Lord with us makes our prayers acceptable in any magical way, so that prayers which God would not otherwise hear He will hear if we offer them there. That it would be superstition to believe. No! it is because the presence of our Lord, if we rightly use it, leads us to pray with Him, and so to pray as He prays. Brethren, lift up your hearts; lift them up unto the Lord. The prayer of consecration has been said; we all by the "Amen" have taken our part in it; God has heard it; heaven and earth are one. He is here, our Risen and Ascended Lord, offering as He ever offers on high, His great sacrifice for us. It is the sacrifice of Calvary, the one sacrifice that never passes away; His mind and heart to-day are the same that His mind and heart were when He hung upon the Cross. To the Father He offers Himself still in His Body and Blood, in lowliest worship, in heartfelt thanksgiving, in deepest longing for our salvation; He gives Himself wholly as the expression of His worship, of His thanksgiving, of His longing for the world's redemption. What prayers shall we offer with Him? Surely—and especially if we have just received Him—we shall pray in His name, pray with Him, pray as He prays. Does He not look to see what prayers we shall offer, and whether He can take them, and make them His own? Sad words are those of to-day's Gospel: "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone." It was so when He died on the Cross; is it not sometimes so as He offers His sacrifice to-day? Is it not sometimes true that in our Eucharists to-day our Lord is left alone, and that, while He prays for the accomplishment

of His Father's will, we are scattered, every man to his own, and have no prayers to offer but those which our own selfishness dictates to us, prayers that fall to the earth, because the Lord cannot make them His, and lift them up to God? Brethren, try to pray as the Lord prays, at the Eucharist and always. Find time in these coming Rogation Days and begin afresh your life of prayer. If hitherto we have asked nothing in the Lord's name, let it be so no longer. Ask and receive, and let your joy be fulfilled.



## SERMON XIV

### THE LORD OUR POWER OF RECOVERY

(*Ascension Day*)

2 Sam. xviii. 3

“ But the people said, Thou shalt not go forth : for if we flee away they will not care for us ; neither if half of us die will they care for us : but thou art worth ten thousand of us : therefore now it is better that thou be ready to succour us out of the city.”

WHAT a picture we have here both of the spirit of King David and of the spirit of his soldiers ! It is the dawn of the last battle-day of the great soldier's life. Everything is ready for the struggle. The army has been organized and the leaders appointed,—Joab and Abishai, those rough sons of thunder, and Ittai the Gittite, the stranger and exile who is the bosom friend of the king. The old warrior's spirit is still unbroken. “ I will surely go forth with you myself also.” But the army will not hear of it. They will not put the cause of the king upon the throw of one battle. Who knows how it will go ? Strange panics seize men ; they themselves, in spite of all their ardour, may flee away ; in the fierce fighting half of them may fall. But that will bring no final victory to the enemy, if the king is out of their reach. If he is safe, they will have in him the promise of an ever-repeated recovery. Let them feel him behind them, the strong support of every division of his army just because he is not himself fighting in the ranks of one.

## I

Few words are necessary to explain the choice of this text to-day; perhaps you have already foreseen the application. There are many heroes of the Old Testament story who seem to bring us near to our Lord Jesus Christ; but few so near as King David brings us. Alone among the heroes of the Old Testament David has this honour, that the prophet calls the expected Messiah by his name. "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it." Can we doubt that in the purpose of God David was intended to foreshadow His Son? Born at Bethlehem, called to his work by the prophet of God, coming forth at first as the lonely champion of God to fight for His people and to conquer for them, kept for long out of the throne that had been promised to him, wandering up and down the country with the little band of followers, whom he is training for their future places in his kingdom, fully confident of his destiny, and yet never by word or deed trying to hurry its accomplishment, who is so like our Lord as he? Or look at him in his passion, in Absalom's rebellion. Does not the story read almost as a transparent allegory? Deserted by the people for whom he has lived and suffered, his own familiar friend lifting up his heel against him, going up "by the ascent of the Mount of Olives," his soul "exceeding sorrowful even unto death," seeing behind all the fury of his enemies the hand of God, and yet looking still to "find favour in the eyes of" God, and for God to "bring Him again, and shew him his habitation," who again so recalls the Lord as he? Might not the Lord in His Passion have said to His Apostles, as he had said to the Pharisees, "Have ye never read what David did?" And now on the other

side of the river the resurrection has come; the scattered and dispirited followers of the king have been gathered and made ready, that they may win for their king the place which by right is his. For the final conflict the king will be in reserve. Joab and Abishai and Ittai will go to battle, but the king—no. Just because he is worth ten thousand of them, he will be behind to succour them out of the city.

## II

We are keeping to-day the festival of our Lord's Ascension. What was the Ascension? It was the entry of our Lord into the heavenly city, out of which He succours us all. We may think of the Ascension in many ways. It was the end of our Lord's long journey to the Father; it was the final exaltation of our Lord's humanity to the glory for which it was intended; it was the entry of the great High Priest into that Holy of Holies, where He ever pleads His sacrifice before the Father; it was, if we may so say, the humanizing of heaven through the passing thither of our great forerunner. In all these ways we may think of the Ascension. Ascension Day, and the Sunday that follows it, are all too short for us to grasp the teaching of the festival. But to-day we will think of the Ascension as the removal of our Lord from us, in order that He may be nearer to us, and succour us, as He could not do, if He were still living the old earthly life.

Perhaps there are times when we wish that we might see our Lord, and converse with Him as His Apostles did. But, brethren, for our Lord to return to the old earthly life would be to put Him further from us rather than nearer to us; it would be to lessen rather than to increase His influence and His power to help. How few of us could go to the Holy Land to find Him! If His natural presence were restored to us, His spiritual presence by His Spirit

would surely cease. We could no longer find Him here in His holy sacraments. When the Lord said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me," He did not, I think, speak only of His lifting up upon the Cross; He spoke of His lifting up by the way of the Cross above the conditions of our earthly life, and of the way in which He would draw us to Himself by the operation of His Holy Spirit. Heaven, where the Lord is, may seem far away; but it is far nearer than Galilee or Jerusalem.

Yes, and not only does the Ascension bring the Lord nearer to us in the right way, but it removes Him from us in the right way also. It so removes Him that neither our cowardice nor our failures can ever bring defeat to Him. Is not that worth remembering as we go out to fight for Him? The cause of the Church is the cause of Christ; but, fail as we may, the King is always in reserve; no victory that the world may win is victory over Him. When our Lord met Satan in the wilderness, when He met Him in the Passion, the victory of His cause really hung upon the result of the conflict, but that issue can never be raised again. Victory is His already; He has "outsoared the shadow of our night." Very right it is that we should feel our responsibility, feel how much will hang upon our courage and faithfulness in the years to come. But do not think that all depends upon it. In our Lord God's purpose is already realized; the kingdom will come. The Church may reach the kingdom, as Israel reached the promised land, only after long wanderings and much suffering, which, had it been more faithful, might have been avoided; but it will certainly reach it. We ourselves individually may fail. We may, as the soldiers said to David, flee away; half of us may fall or lose our faith; but it will not affect the final result, and the enemy will not "care for us." Look at St. John's vision in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse. The woman arrayed with the sun is the Church, and her

son is our Lord, and the great red dragon is Satan. The dragon stands before the woman to devour her child, but the child is "caught up unto God, and unto His throne." Henceforth, the great red dragon is not only beaten, but he knows it. He is cast down to the earth, and his angels are cast down with him. And though he persecutes "the woman who brought forth the man-child," it is the persecution of baffled hatred, not attack with the hope of victory. He has great wrath, "knowing that he hath but a short time." And what that vision sets forth the history of the Church has abundantly illustrated. The Church of God has suffered awful defeats; think of what North Africa once was, and of what it is to-day. Again and again the enemies of the Church have looked upon its destruction as certain. But always, since it was not Christ Who failed and was defeated, the Church has had the power of recovery. The Ascended Lord has succoured us out of the city, poured out His Spirit anew, and sent us to fight again.

### III

You see, then, the grand encouragement which the Ascension brings to us. We are fighting for a cause which cannot be ultimately defeated; though we fall, we shall arise. But there is one point more. Is there not a profound lesson for us in the king's charge to his captains: "Deal gently for My sake with the young man, even with Absalom"? When Absalom fought, he meant killing; when David fought, he meant saving. Never let us forget the mind of our King towards those against whom we have to fight. Fight, of course, we must. There will be times when, not only by word, but by act also, we shall have to attack so vigorously those who love and adhere to evil, that they will see in us their enemies, and nothing else. Evil is evil; and, while men identify themselves with evil it is idle to speak of distinguishing between



the sinner and his sin. But our King calls us to recognize the distinction at the first moment that the sinner allows it to be made; He has "no pleasure in the death of him that dieth"; what he desires is prisoners, "taken captive," as St. Paul says, by the Lord's servant to the will of God. There is not an enemy whom we shall be called to fight who may not some day be a friend: let us so fight that we may make him so. Surely in the whole story of Absalom's rebellion there is nothing stranger than that Amasa, the general of Absalom's army, should in the end have been put in the place of Joab. Open rebellion David could forgive; what he could not forgive was that his own soldier should compass the death of his son. And our King in His turn has warned us to take heed what manner of spirit we are of. He will not own a zeal which is not one with love.

## SERMON XV

### THE APPEAL OF THE ASCENDED CHRIST

*(Sunday after the Ascension)*

John xii. 31, 32

“ Now is the judgement of this world : now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.”

THESE are bold words; and they seem all the bolder, when we think of the position of Him Who speaks them. Holy Week has already begun; before it is over our Lord will be crucified. Soon the crowds will fall away; even the Apostles will desert Him, and He will be left alone to bear His Passion. And yet, you see, His words are the words of a conqueror. He does not say, as we might have expected, “ Now is my judgment,” but “ Now is the judgment of this world.” It is not He, but Satan, “ the prince of this world,” who will “ be cast out.” Instead of thinking of the time when all men will desert Him, He says, “ I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” Brethren, there is something attractive about boldness like this. Such words draw us—do they not?—to Him Who speaks them.

But what did the Lord mean? How could He speak as He did in the face of death? It was because He looked forward to the Resurrection and the Ascension, and to all the work for us, and in us, that would follow them. Death was coming, but death was only a stage on the way to glory and to power. What had He said but just before? “ Except a corn of wheat fall into

the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Save a grain of wheat, and nothing comes of it ; sow it in the ground, and a new plant will spring from it. So it would be with the Lord Himself. Had He refused to die, not much would have come of His wondrous life. But He did die ; He was lifted up from the earth upon the Cross for all to see ; through the death upon the Cross He passed to the new life of the Resurrection : and from the life of the Resurrection He was lifted up from the earth by His Ascension to the very throne of God. And now, in that life of glory to which He has passed, He is drawing all men unto Himself.

## I

Brethren, it is of the Ascended Lord drawing us to Himself that I would speak to you to-day. Ascension Day is a great day of the Christian Year ; would that we observed it better ! It was a great day for our Lord Himself ; it is a great day for you and me. It brought the earthly life of the Lord to a close ; it began that heavenly life that He is living still.

We can surely ourselves see how needful it was that our Lord's Ascension should be witnessed by human eyes. Since the Resurrection, our Lord had shown Himself to His followers again and again. He had shown them not only that He was risen from the dead, but that a great change had passed over Him. His Body was now a spiritual body ; our Lord appeared and disappeared just as He would. Wherever His disciples might be, in the upper room, on the road, fishing by the sea, they never knew but that at any moment they might see the Lord, and hear His voice saying, " Peace be unto you." And if they had never seen our Lord ascend, they would have been continually expecting Him to appear. They could hardly have gone about their work ; they would have been disturbed by all manner of reports about Him. So we read that

our Lord allowed them to witness His Ascension. He gathered them together for the last time, gave them His last directions, and then, as He lifted His Hands over them in blessing, was parted from them, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

What cloud was that which received the Lord? Was it just a passing cloud in the summer sky? Was it not rather the cloud that had appeared at the Transfiguration, and from which God had spoken; the cloud which, it was believed, had gone before Israel in the wilderness, and had filled the Temple of Solomon at its dedication, the cloud that was ever the sign and symbol of the presence of God? If so, what it meant was that the Lord Jesus, Who had lived so long with them, had now returned to the Father, and they must look to see Him no more till the day of His triumphant return. At the Transfiguration the cloud passed away and left the Lord behind; now the cloud passed away and the Lord with it. It meant that the Lord Jesus, true man though He was, had passed into heaven, and received the throne that He had won. He had always been King by right, but now the King was crowned. Ever since the Ascension, we know that one like ourselves shares the sovereignty of God; and however dark the immediate outlook may be, all things will work together for good to those who love Him.

## II

But it is not upon the Ascension that we shall fix our thoughts to-day, but upon our Lord in His glory. It is not the Ascension that draws us; it is the Ascended Lord. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." The Ascension means what it does to us because of what it can tell us of our Lord as He is to-day. How little, as a rule, we care about the lives of the dead, and how much we care about the lives of the living! Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon—we read about them in our books of history,

but as a rule they do not greatly interest us. They have passed away, and we have no more to do with them. But let our newspaper tell us something of the past life of men who are still alive and working, of the statesmen, or soldiers, or writers of the present day, and at once we are interested. It is their past lives that have made them what they are to-day, and that enable us to understand them. So it is with all that we learn about our Lord Jesus Christ. If our Lord had passed away, and we had no more to do with Him, His life and experience would have lost their interest. But it is not so. The Lord is not only one who has lived; He is living still, and alive for evermore. He is One, in Whose presence we ever stand, One Who watches over, and guides, and cares for us, One Who will at last come to be our Judge. And therefore everything that we can learn of His past is full of interest, since it helps us to understand what He is to-day. What, then, has the Ascension made Him? How does it enable Him to draw us all unto Himself?

Brethren, in the first place, the Ascension enables our Lord to draw us all by His example. We see in that glory that our Lord has won the certain end of every life that follows Him. It is hard for you and me to live a life like the Lord's. Our temptations are so great; our difficulties are so many. It is hard to be really honest, in a world like this; hard to be temperate, hard to be pure, when others are not so, and our passions are as strong as theirs. And harder still, perhaps, it is to sacrifice ourselves and live for God, to love Him and to love our neighbours, when our neighbours do not love us, and we cannot yet feel that God does either. Yes, it is hard. It was hard for the Lord Himself. He was true man as we are, and He had far more to endure than you or I. But He did live for God only. He did sacrifice Himself to the uttermost, and the Ascension was the consequence. Just as Jesus on the Cross is the revelation of



human suffering, so Jesus on His throne is the revelation of human joy. And now to-day, from His throne of glory, He draws us all thither to Himself. He points us to the joy, with which His whole nature is filled, and He says to us, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my father honour." Brethren, is it not worth while? Can we ask more than that—to be where our Lord is, to be honoured in our measure as He is honoured? If we follow, it will be so. "Faithful is the saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we endure, we shall also reign with Him."

We see, then, how our Lord Ascended draws us by His example. But He draws us also by His work for us in heaven. Yes! His work for us, for the Lord is working still. Do we perhaps forget that? Do we think of our Lord as doing nothing, as only enjoying the joy and glory that He has won? Certainly it is not so. There is no glory in idleness, or joy either. Glory and joy lie in grand, free, successful action. To feel ourselves alive, and active; to have grand work to do, and be able without hindrance perfectly to do it; to see all round us the fruits of our activity, and to be carrying it forward in triumph to the end, that is glory and joy even here. The idle man is not enough alive for joy. And, little as we can know as yet of the joy of our Lord, it is, we are sure, no idle joy. He has work to do for us, and He is able perfectly to do it; He sees already of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied.

Firstly, there is the work of Intercession. The same Lord, Who lived and died for us here, stands ever in the presence of God, to plead for us there. There is no need that we can feel, in any circumstances of temptation or conflict but finds perfect expression in the intercession for us of the Son of Man. Yes, and even though we sin, if our sin be not unto death, our Lord intercedes. "If any man sin, we have an advocate

with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins."

Secondly, in that heavenly region, to which our Lord has gone, He is, as He has told us, preparing a place for us, a place that will one day be our own, and our own for ever. If He were not there, we could never go there; but, now that He is there, we can. And therefore it is that, not by His example only, but by what He is doing for us, our Ascended Lord is drawing us all unto Himself. His intercession makes it possible for us to make the journey; His presence in Heaven prepares us a place when our journey is over. Suppose that we were told that in some distant land far richer than our own, a great property has been left to us, and that all was ready for us to come and take possession. Suppose that though the journey was long and difficult, one who had himself made the journey was ready to guide us, and secure our inheritance of our property; should we not go? Our Ascended Lord has done all that. Shall we not follow after Him?

" O Paradise ! O Paradise !  
I greatly long to see  
The special place my dearest Lord  
In love prepares for me."

Do we want our place to be empty after all, or to be given to another?

Our Lord, then, draws us by His example, and He draws us by the work that He is doing for us in heaven. Once again, He draws us by His work within us—by that Holy Spirit, Whom He has sent to lead us upward to Himself. And, brethren, of all His means of drawing there is none so powerful as that. It is the Holy Spirit that awakens us to see those needs in ourselves which only our Lord can satisfy; it is the Holy Spirit Who shows us the Lord, as the One Who can satisfy them; it is the Holy Spirit Who imparts to us the life by which we can follow the Lord, and will help us all the way, until we are one with Him for ever. And

therefore it was that the very first thing that the Lord did after His Ascension was to send to us His Holy Spirit; and that, having thought to-day of the Ascension, we shall go on next Sunday to think of that gift of the Holy Spirit to which the Ascension led. Brethren, if you would feel within yourselves the drawing of the Ascended Lord, you must pray, as the Collect for to-day teaches us to pray, that God will send us His Holy Ghost to comfort us and "exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before."

" He came sweet influence to impart,  
A gracious, willing Guest,  
While He can find one humble heart  
Wherein to rest."

Yes! He is a guest, and a guest must be invited. It is the humble heart wherein He rests, and we must humble our hearts before Him. But if we invite Him and prepare for Him He will surely come; for our Lord has said: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

### III

So, then, by His example, by His work for us, and by His work in us, our Lord is drawing us all unto Himself. Brethren, do you feel that drawing? And if you feel it, do you yield to it? It is not enough to be drawn; we must freely yield to the drawing. How many kinds of drawing there are! See two teams of men pulling one against another in a tug of war. Each is being drawn, but each is resisting the drawing. So it may be with us. Our Lord draws, but He does not drag; we can resist His drawing, if we will. See two horses drawing a wagon up a steep hill. We cannot say that the wagon resists, but it does nothing to help. It is just a dead weight; it is all that the horses can do to draw it. So, again, it may be with us. We rise,

thank God, but oh, how slowly ! How little we do to help our rising ! But there is a third drawing. See a party of men climbing a Swiss mountain. The guide goes first, cutting the steps. From above he lets down his rope, and draws the climbers after him. Through all difficulties and dangers they willingly follow, step by step, where the guide has gone. Not only are they drawn, but they welcome and respond to the drawing. Is not that the model for us all ? Yield to the Ascended Lord, for He draws us with the bands of love. Look up to Him, and think of the glory He has won. Think of His intercession for you, and of the home that He prepares for you. Yield yourself to that Holy Spirit Who works in you already, and will work in you, if you pray for Him more and more. And then at home and in your daily work try to rise continually higher and higher towards the Lord by faith in Him, love towards Him, and obedience to Him, and one day where He is, there you will be also, and you will reign with Him for ever.

SERMON XVI  
THE HOLY GHOST  
(*Whit Sunday*)

Phil. ii. 12, 13

“ So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.”

So, brethren, St. Paul declares to us that great truth of which we think to-day. It is God—no one less than He—Who is at work within us. God is not just One, Who made the world, and all within it. He is not just One, Who in our Lord came down to the world nearly two thousand years ago, revealed Himself to us, and did a great work for our redemption. No! He is One Who is here within us Christians now, working ceaselessly to carry out the great purpose that He has for us and for the world. That is why we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. It is God Who is calling us—how can we refuse to answer to Him? It is God Who is within us—how, if we answer, can we fail to succeed?

I

Let us consider for a moment how St. Paul came to write these words. That great soldier of Christ was now a prisoner in Rome. And the Christian people of Philippi knew, as we of late have come to know, the right way to deal with prisoners. Prisoners are far away from their friends; prisoners may be in want.



The right thing to do is to send presents to them, whenever the opportunity occurs. So it was with the Philippians. They had sent a present to St. Paul by Epaphroditus. Now St. Paul is writing to thank them. But he is far from writing for that reason alone. If they were anxious about him, he, too, though in a different way, was anxious about them. It was not that they were giving him special cause for anxiety; a better church than that of Philippi was nowhere to be found. But it was many months since he had been able to visit them, and how were they prospering in their spiritual life without him? Certainly they had "always obeyed," always responded nobly to what God had done, and was doing for them. But would they persevere now? St. Paul's presence, his words, his example had counted for so much. Would they succeed as well now that he was in prison at Rome? St. Paul says: "You must not depend upon me; work out your own salvation; look after yourselves and one another. Do not be faithful only when I am with you; be so all the more now that I am absent." And then he appeals to that great truth of which we are thinking to-day. "Look within you," he seems to say, "and you will find a power at work. It does two things for you. It continually leads you to will, to make up your minds to do just what God's purpose demands that you should do. Then, when you have made up your minds, it goes further. It leads you not only to will, but to carry out what you have willed, in spite of all difficulties and discouragements without or within you. Well, that power is God—nothing less than He. 'It is God which worketh in you.' What a responsibility that brings, and what an encouragement! You may well fear and tremble lest you should fail to answer to Him. But you need not fear and tremble lest you should fail if you do answer: God will see to that. 'He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.'"

## II

You see, then, how St. Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit. He does not begin with any high and difficult doctrine about Him; he begins with the common ground of Christian experience. Is not that the best way to begin? The Church, we know, has a doctrine of the Holy Trinity; next Sunday we may think of it; the Holy Spirit has His own great place in that. But Lydia of Thyatira in her shop, the jailer of the town jail, and the other simple Christians of Philippi knew little about it yet; I doubt whether St. Paul himself had thought it out very clearly. What they all knew was that within them was a power at work, which they had but lately come to know, and which made all life different to them. And, brethren, I think that we ourselves may well begin with the same great fact. If we love our Lord, and keep His commandments, the Holy Spirit is within us also, leading us to will and to act for the fulfilment of God's purpose, just as He was leading the Philippians of old. Never think of the Holy Spirit as if He were One outside you; think of Him as within you, the Person of the Holy Trinity Whom you yourselves most directly know. We may think of the Father most naturally as One raised far above us, the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity; we may think of the Son most naturally as One raised far above us, for He shares the Father's throne. But we should think of the Holy Spirit as One Who has come to dwell within us, and to abide with us for ever. Christians in the early centuries do not seem to have prayed to the Holy Spirit. It is not that He is not God, and that we may not pray to Him; the beautiful hymn of the Emperor Charles the Great, "Come, Holy Ghost," is a most right and proper prayer. It is that the Holy Spirit is so truly within us, so truly the inspirer of our prayers to the Father and to the Son, that it is not so natural to address Him directly, as to address by His inspiration the Father and the Son from

Whom He comes. Yes! the Holy Spirit is within us; if we look within, we shall find Him. Shall we not then look within to-day, and see if He is not doing all that St. Paul describes?

But let us notice first the purpose for which He works in us. It is, St. Paul says, "for God's good pleasure," for the carrying out of that great purpose of God, for which He is ever working. We shall never understand the greatness of our responsibility unless we remember that. God works in us, no doubt, for our own individual salvation; every act of obedience or of disobedience to His call has its own effect upon that. But God does not work in us for our individual salvation alone. He works in us, and sends us His calls, for the sake of the salvation of others as well as of ourselves, because each of us has his own place in God's great purpose for the world, and only if we respond to Him can it be fully realized. It is with the plan of God just as it is with the plan of campaign in a great war. The plan may exist in its completeness only in the brain of the commander-in-chief. But parts of it will be understood by the generals who are acting under him; and even the private soldiers, who understand it little or not at all, will know that, unless they are prepared unflinchingly to obey, the plans of their commander will fail. The sentry who sleeps at his post will endanger not merely himself but the men behind him. The weakness or failure of one division may mean the loss of all the ground won by others. If there is to be full success, each must recognize that more may depend upon him than he can ever hope to understand. So is it with the plan of God. God is working in us for our own sake, but not for our own sake alone. The commands He gives to us, the calls He sends to us, are not simply the commands and the calls which we must obey to work out our own salvation; they come to us as members of the Church and army of God, as God's instruments for the accomplishment of His purpose, and upon our courage and obedience the

full accomplishment of that purpose depends. It is here that we find the answer to a charge that is often brought against us. Those who are not themselves Christians often charge Christianity with being nothing better than a form of selfishness. They say that we are always worrying about a contemptible salvation for our own contemptible souls. And we answer: "Not at all. We do work out our own personal salvation with fear and trembling, and we are quite right to do so. We do not think even our own souls contemptible, since our Lord has died for them. But we are not working for our own souls alone. We are working, as God works, for the accomplishment of His plan; and, though that plan embraces our own little lives, it embraces them as little threads in a vast whole, and we are working for the whole, as He does."

You see, then, the purpose of God's working in us; see now the method, as we find it in our own experience. He works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Observe the distinction. He works in us to will first, and only when the will is gained does He work in us to accomplish. Think of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was amazed, we read, appalled, almost stunned, by the thought of the approaching Passion. And there in the Garden, may we not say, God worked in Him to will? There He accepted God's will, determined to fulfil it whatever that will might cost. Then, when He had thus willed, God worked in Him to accomplish. The Father's presence upheld Him to the end, so that at last all was accomplished that God had intended for Him, and He could say, "It is finished." Think of St. Paul after our Lord had appeared to him, in his three days blindness at Damascus. Was not that perhaps his Gethsemane, the time in which God was working in him to will, to surrender himself to fulfil the call laid upon him, in spite of all the sacrifice which it would involve? Then, when the will was won, God worked in him to accomplish, and through all the toilsome years of his

Apostolic life, never left him till his course was finished, and his work done. And, my brethren, I think we shall find that the way in which God works in us is the same still. He works in us to will first, and to accomplish afterwards. Do not expect that you will feel strong enough to obey the calls God sends to you, until you have made up your mind to obey them. The willing must come first. God's call comes to us perhaps to make some great sacrifice for Him, or to undertake some difficult work for Him. And we, too, are appalled by what He asks, like our Lord in Gethsemane. We say: "I do not feel able to do that; I cannot do that." But then we are not asked to do it yet; we are only asked as yet to will it. We must not expect God to give us the strength to do, until we have let Him work in us to will. We must accept the task laid upon us in spite of all our weakness; we must will it because God calls us to will it. Then, as we set about it, we shall find the strength. We shall find that God, who worked in us to will, works in us also to accomplish, and that, as we yield ourselves to Him, all that He has asked is carried through.

### III

That, then, is our Whitsunday message. That power, which we find working within us is God—God the Holy Spirit—no one less than He. It is not just our conscience—that would only give us commands, without enabling us to fulfil them. It is not just our better nature—that would be a feeble thing with which to overcome the difficulties we may have to meet. No, it is God Himself that works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure. God the Father has been ever working; "My Father worketh hitherto," our Lord said. He made the world for the fulfilment of His purpose, and He is ever at work for its fulfilment. Our Lord Jesus Christ is ever working. His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him,



and to finish His work. He lived for it in His life on earth, and He lives for it still. "The life that he liveth he liveth unto God." And what Whitsunday tells us is that the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son is working also for that purpose, working in us, and calling each one of us to work with Him. There lies our responsibility, and there lies our abiding strength. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you." Men may come, and men may go. We may thank God for the help they have given us, as the Philippians doubtless thanked God for St. Paul. But we do not depend upon them, or obey in their presence only; we depend upon God, Who ever abides in us, and in Whose strength we can ever be victorious. And if St. Paul calls us to "fear and trembling," it is not to the fear and trembling of the coward, beaten already before the fight begins. It is to the fear of those who know how much depends upon what they do, and cannot bear to think that unreadiness on their part might set a limit to the victory that their great captain desires to win. Suppose that you and I in the Great War had been going into action for the first time. What would have sent us to our knees would not have been the thought of the German machine-guns; it would have been the fear that our nerve might fail, and that we might prove unworthy of the cause for which we were fighting. That should be our fear as we go to fight for God—not lest He should fail us, but lest we should fail Him.

## SERMON XVII

### THE NAME OF THE LORD

*(Trinity Sunday)*

Prov. xviii. 10

“The name of the Lord is a strong tower : the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”

THESE, brethren, are grand words. The man who wrote them knew well the value of a strong tower. He did not live, as we do, in a sea-girt land, a land of safety and perpetual peace. Israel's land was the pathway of the imperial armies of the Eastern world. Many a time to the lonely shepherd, as he watched his flocks, there must have come the news that an enemy was in sight. Of what value to him, then, would be a strong tower into which he might run, and be safe ! Now to the writer of these words there came the thought that the Name of the Lord was like one of those strong towers. Long ago had that Name been proclaimed, and all through his people's history it had been found to be true. “The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth ; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin ; and that will by no means clear the guilty.” That was God's Name, and that was what He had been found to be. So, when the evil day came, the righteous man, the man who had done his duty, rested on the grand and beautiful Name of the Lord. God's Name was his strong tower ; he ran into it, and was safe.

## I

Brethren, it is this thought that I would put before you this morning. To-day is Trinity Sunday, God's Sunday, the Sunday of all Sundays of the year, when we think of God Himself, of His nature and character, and of all that they mean to ourselves. All through the Christian year we have been learning God's Name, learning it by considering the great things He has done. Each festival, if we have kept it rightly, has taught us more of Him, more of His holiness, more of His power, more of His wisdom, more of His love. We have seen His Name in creation, and we have seen it in redemption; we have seen it in the mission, in the life, and the death of His Son; we have seen it in the gift of His Holy Spirit. And now on Trinity Sunday, we try to gather together all that we have learned, to look at it as a living whole, in all its mystery and in all its gladness, that we may praise God for the revelation He has given to us, and worship Him just as He has been revealed. Brethren, the spirit of Trinity Sunday is the spirit of the Te Deum, the spirit of loving and prostrate worship. "We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship Thee; the Father everlasting. To Thee all Angels cry aloud; the Heavens, and all the Powers therein. To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory." We dwell with joy on the praise that Apostles, and Prophets, and the white-robed army of Martyrs are offering to Him in that unseen world, which is so far and yet so near. We dwell with joy on that acknowledgment of God which, even here, the holy Church throughout the world is able to give. We think of the Father in His infinite Majesty, of His only Son so worthy of our adoration, of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. We think of the eternal glory of the Son, and of all that work of our redemption in which the

Name of God shone out as never before. Only when we have exhausted all that we know how to say in the praise of God, do we think of ourselves, and pray for ourselves. That is the spirit of Trinity Sunday, and would that we had more of it, every one of us! Is not that spirit worth an effort to gain? You go out on some close day of August, and climb to the highest point of the hills. And you feel twice the man that you did before, for the sea-winds are blowing round you, and all the closeness of the city is left below. So it would be if in our religion we could rise out of our own sins, and our own selfish aims, and think of God Himself. Brethren, shall we not try? Do not only try to pray; do not even only try to praise; try to worship. Try to think of God just as He is, and lie at His Feet to adore Him.

## II

Yes, you will say, all that is true, but what has the doctrine of the Trinity to do with it? "The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty." Yes, that is the God in Whom we want to believe. Tell us of a God like that, help us to believe in Him, and we will thank you. But what has all that to do with the language we have heard this morning? What has it to do with the God of the Athanasian Creed, Whose three Persons we are not to confound, and Whose one Substance we are not to divide? If the Athanasian Creed said that, if we desired to be saved, it was before all things necessary that we should believe God to be full of compassion and gracious, we could understand its language. But what in the world can it have to do with our salvation that we believe in Three Persons and One God?

Well! brethren, what do you want? Do you want

an idea, or do you want a reality? Do you want a beautiful picture in your own mind of what you would like God to be, if there were a God? Or do you want the assurance that God actually is all that you desire Him to be, and that, if only you will live for Him, you will yourself find Him so? If you only want the idea, there it is in those words I have quoted twice, and much help may it be to you! But I am afraid that you will find, that, when the day of danger or sorrow or temptation comes, that beautiful idea is not much of a tower, and that, even when you have run into it, you will not be particularly safe. What you will want then is God, and not merely an idea of God, and if then, as far as you know, the beautiful idea has no reality to correspond to it, that idea will help you little, or not at all. Now the people who most profoundly believe that God is all this that we desire Him to be, are the people who have reached their belief in God's character through their belief in our Lord and their belief in His Holy Spirit. It is perfectly true that it is difficult for our minds to believe all that the Church teaches about the Son and the Spirit. If I could prove to you that God is our gracious Father without speaking to you of His Son or His Spirit, I would gladly do so. The trouble is that I do not know how to do this, and that I have never yet met any one who did. We thought last Lent of the great revelation of God which our Lord brought to us, of how He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and showed us what the Father was by His life of love and His death of sacrifice. But if our Lord was not, as the Athanasian Creed says, our Lord and our God, if He was just a man like ourselves, no more eternal and almighty than you and I, what becomes of the revelation? His life was a revelation of man, and not a revelation of God; and His death, so far from showing that God is our loving Father, was almost the strongest indication possible that He is nothing of the kind. If our Lord just died and never rose, if He was



never declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection, then the simple fact is that God allowed the noblest man who ever lived, the man most utterly devoted to Him, to perish by a death of shame and of torture, with no security that we know that there was anything beyond; the simple fact is that in the noblest battle for God and for right that was ever fought, God allowed the wrong to triumph, and the right to be beaten, as far as we know, totally and finally. What becomes of the Fatherhood of God then?

Again, consider that revelation of God which we have in the presence within us of the Holy Spirit, that presence to guide and comfort and sustain which to many, even more perhaps than the life and death of the Lord, assures them of God's interest in them and love for them. If that presence that we find within is not the presence of our Lord and our God, if it is neither eternal, nor almighty, what becomes of the revelation? What we thought was God's presence is just a part of our own nature; the noblest impulses it gives to us, the grandest strength which it seems to afford, are simply stray products of our subconscious life, no more to be trusted, no more calling to be obeyed, than any other chance impulse which may happen to visit us. We do not know whence they come, or whither they go; and, if we yield to them, we may find ourselves just as much abandoned as those who do not believe in our Lord's Resurrection must believe that He was. Certainly it is hard for the mind to believe in three Persons in one God, though, were there time, I think I could show you that it is more rational to believe than not to believe it. What I want to show you this morning is simply that the reality of God's revelation depends upon it, that if you want to believe in any Name of the Lord which will be a strong tower to you, it is through faith in our Lord and the Spirit as well as in the Father that you must come to know the Name, and that if before all things it is necessary to believe in God's love and

holiness, it follows that before all things it is necessary to hold the Catholic faith.

### III

And now, brethren, for ourselves who do so believe, who believe that God is full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth, because we believe not merely in one far-off God, but in a Son Who has come down to live and die for us, and in a Spirit given to us to strengthen, and inspire. What a strong tower the Name of God ought to be for every one of us! How safe we ought to feel as we run into it! Which of us that has learned to trust in God has any fear for his own future, or for the future of his nation either, if only both the one and the other are ready to do the will of God? Certainly there are difficulties before us, difficulties for ourselves, difficulties for our nation, difficulties above all for the Church of God. There are those whose hearts are failing them for fear, and in looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. But we, brethren, who know the Name of the Lord, will fear nothing, except lest we be not among the righteous who have the right to run into it. We will trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon our God.

Have you ever noticed that the greatest revelations of God have often been given in the days of crisis? The vision of Isaiah, of which we heard in our first lesson this morning, came as the Assyrian armies were gathering to attack Jerusalem. The vision of St. John, of which we heard in our second lesson, came when the armies of Rome were similarly gathering. It was the vision of God which enabled them to look forward to the future with serenity and hope. In that vision we too will be strong to-day. We cannot say of course, that there are no dark days in store either for our country or for ourselves. The God in Whom we believe is One Who by no means clears the guilty,

and both we and our country are guilty of much that will little bear the glance of God. But we know also that, though He by no means clears the guilty, He is full of compassion and gracious none the less; He is slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth; He keeps mercy for thousands, and forgives iniquity and transgression and sin. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, that He can work by one as well as by another, and that, if only our minds are set upon righteousness, God's blessing will be upon us, and His protection sure. Other things may change and fail us, but the Name of the Lord never. There He is unchanged, unchangeable, come what may, our Maker, our Preserver, our Redeemer, our Friend, "perfect in power, in love, and purity"—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God. Learn to think of Him; so live that you may delight to think of Him. Love Him, honour Him, praise Him, fear Him and then fear nothing else. Then His Name will indeed be your strong tower. You will not fear, though the earth be moved, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea, for the "Eternal God" will be "your refuge, and underneath the everlasting arms."

## SERMON XVIII

### THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES

*(The Fifth Sunday after Trinity)*

*Patronal Festival of St. Peter and St. Paul)*

Luke v. 10

“ Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.”

WHAT a wonderful memory in after years must have been to St. Peter this morning by the lake ! Much as it meant to him at the time, it must have meant far more when the years had thrown their light upon its meaning. It was a picture and a parable—was it not?—of the extension of the Church. “ From henceforth thou shalt catch men.” St. Peter would never cease to be a fisherman; the change would be only in the prize that he would seek to win. Ever he would be a “ fisher of the souls of men,” and his method would be the method which the Lord had taught him on the morning by the lake. He would but have to believe, to listen to the Lord’s Voice, and obey it; the Lord Himself would do the rest.

#### I

Brethren, it is of this acted parable of the Lord that we will think together this morning. It is with the acted parables of the Lord as it is with His spoken parables; we may give to them a simpler, or a deeper interpretation. Which of these interpretations most appeals to us will depend largely upon the cast of our minds. To some the simpler interpretation will appear merely shallow, while to others the deeper

interpretation will appear merely fanciful. Thus if this morning I suggest a meaning for the Gospel which may be new to you, you will understand that I do but suggest it. This at any rate is true, that the way in which the Church of the Old Testament grew into the Catholic Church, of which we are members, seems to be strangely foreshadowed in the Gospel for the day, and that Gospel will help us to understand the Divine method. Moreover, this subject is suggested to us by your Patronal Festival. We cannot deal with it, without being led to think of St. Paul as well as of St. Peter, and of the relations in which they stood, the one to the other. Yet more—the study of the Divine method will not, I hope, be without a message for ourselves to-day. Our lot is cast, not merely in a great crisis of our nation's history, but in a great crisis of the history of the Church, and of the working out of God's purpose for the world. Nothing will be the same when the war is over; we may have to face religious as well as national changes as startling as any which had to be faced by St. Peter and St. Paul themselves. Well! if it be so, we shall be in the hands of the same Master, and to see how He acted in their days may prepare us for the way in which He may act in our own, and for what He may ask us to do in co-operation with Him.

## II

How, then, let us ask, did our Lord act in His building of the Church? Strictly speaking, our Lord did not "found" the Church; the Church was in the world long before He was. The nation of Israel was the One Holy Apostolic Church of God, One by the common relation of its members to Him, Holy by their consecration to His service, Apostolic in a true sense by the mission with which they were charged to the world. And if this Church was not yet Catholic, open to all the world, that limitation, as its best teachers knew, was only for a time. But when the



Lord came, the Church of God was very far from being what He had intended it to be. The people of God were torn by dissensions; they were morally corrupt; they were very largely imbued with the spirit of the world to which they had been sent. There was sound material still; God's work in the past had in no wise been in vain; but the sound and useful material was mingled with much that was utterly worthless for God's purpose. Thus, though the Lord had not to found the Church, He had to build or rebuild it from the bottom. He had, so to say, to dig down through the rubbish till He found the rock, and build afresh upon it. How, then, did He do this? The test which He applied was the test of faith in Himself; He Himself was His own touchstone of character. When He made His appeal, the sound part of the nation gathered to Him; in finding faith, He found the rock upon which He could build. So it surely was that the Lord said, "Thou art Peter"—rock; "and on this rock I will build My Church." St. Peter was not the whole of the rock-foundation, but He was a part of it, as his faith sufficiently proved, the first part of the rock that the spade struck, as it dug down through the rubbish which concealed it. That was what the Lord did in His earthly life. He did not Himself then build, or rebuild the Church—that could only be after the gift of the Spirit; but He found and laid bare in the Apostles the rock-foundation upon which the building of God could rise. How, then, was the Church built after the first Whitsunday? Was it at once thrown open to all the world? No, not at once. Look at the early speeches of St. Peter in the Acts. There is no launching out yet into the deep; at most he thrusts out a little from the land. His appeal at first is to the Jews only; he has no idea as yet that any one can be a member of the Church of Christ unless first he becomes a Jew; what He seeks is a national conversion to the national Messiah. And when the time does come for the Church to launch out

into the deep of the Gentile world, St. Peter receives a new revelation. He has the vision of the great sheet let down from heaven; he is taught that he is to call no man common or unclean; he sees the Holy Spirit plainly bestowed upon Gentiles as well as upon Jews. What a revelation it was! God's people from the first had had a mission to the world, but their mission had seemed to fail. All the long night of their history they had toiled and taken nothing. Now at the Lord's word they are anew to let down the net. And mark what happens. It is just as the Gospel says. On the one hand, the Gentiles pour into the Church; the Apostles inclose a great multitude of fishes. But, on the other, the nets break. That is what we see in the story of the ingathering of the Gentiles. The new wine bursts the old bottles; the old boundaries disappear; principles and methods, which St. Peter had thought eternal, pass away. The Church passes through a revolution, not by the action of the Apostles, but by the direct action of God Himself, and the Apostles can only follow where He leads. More than this, the Twelve find themselves no longer sufficient. The Apostles, Jews of Palestine, must beckon unto their partners in the other ship, the Jews scattered over the heathen world. St. Barnabas, the Jew of Cyprus, and St. Paul, the Jew of Cilicia, come to the front now; the elder Apostles must share their position with them. So, as we see in the Epistle to the Galatians, the sphere of St. Peter's labour suffers a limitation; it is no longer St. Peter only that stands out above the rest, but St. Peter and St. Paul. James and Cephas and John are to go to the Jews; Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles. There is no attempt to mend the old broken net, and confine the Gentiles within it. The law of Moses and the Temple-worship are seen to be no longer necessary; Christ the Lord is all. Moreover, with this change there comes another change. The glory of the Lord is revealed anew; He is seen to be far more than at first they had fully

understood. Just as the glory of the Lord had been revealed to St. Peter in the miraculous draught of fishes, so that he cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," so the glory of the Lord is now revealed by the ingathering of the Gentiles. Put side by side the way in which St. Peter speaks of the Lord in the early chapters of the Acts and the way in which St. Paul speaks of Him later in his Epistles, and you will see this. The Lord is no longer just the Messiah of the Jews; He is seen to be the Lord and Saviour of the world.

### III

You see, then, brethren, how the Gospel for the day anticipates the extension of the Church, and how the very conjunction of the names of the two great Apostles reminds us of the method which the Lord adopted. Always it is faith in Himself that the Lord seeks first in the members of His Church; only believers are of use to Him. And when He has found believers, the Lord works through them in very unexpected ways. The growth and extension of the Church are in His Hands rather than in theirs; they but hear His calls, and co-operate with Him. What does all this say to us in our own circumstances to-day?

It tells us, firstly, that what most matters is our personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is those whose faith in Him is clear and definite, who are the rock on which the building of God can rise; the rest are shifting sand. In the Church Catholic, in the English Church, in the individual parish, all depends upon the believers, and upon the depth and sincerity of their faith. Mere external adherence to the Church is of little value; the Church is not necessarily advancing because that is growing greater, nor necessarily failing because that is becoming less. You and I may live to see nominal Christians far fewer than they are to-day. The great Lord of the Church may have once more to purify it as by fire. He may have to

dig down once more till He finds the rock of believing men and women, and rebuild the Church on them. That is what matters—clear faith in our Lord, self-surrender and devotion to Him. Let us remember it in all our controversies. The controversies that matter are those which centre round our Lord's Person. The beliefs which matter are the beliefs which are essential to our trust in our Lord, and our adherence to Him. As to what these beliefs may be we may not all at once see eye to eye; some would lengthen the list, and some would shorten it. But that is the test to apply. If a man's faith is right in our Lord Jesus Christ, ultimately it will be right in everything else.

Secondly, it says to us that, when once our faith is clear, we must wait on the Lord, and allow Him to work through us in His own way. There is surely a remarkable contrast between the freedom and teachableness of the Apostolic Church and the rigidity and want of teachableness of the Church of many later centuries. The Church is meant to be a theocracy, a body of men and women under the direct guidance of God. The Church of the Apostles was such a theocracy, as the Book of the Acts will show us, and the Church ought ever to be so. We must not so bind ourselves by the methods and precedents of the past that we bar out the Divine guidance in the present. Do not think that I am advocating the playing fast and loose with principles. But it is one thing to hold fast to the principles in which we believe, and quite another to be so certain that our principles are right, that we will not even consider a revision of them in view of wider knowledge and of a wider experience of the ways of God with men. If our nets break, so much the worse for the nets. We do not find in the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul, if we except one moment at Antioch, one single example of unfaithfulness to principle. But we do find them coming to see that much which they had thought necessary to God's purpose was really unnecessary, that, having served

its purpose, it must pass away; we do find them revolutionizing their action in view of the wider truth which God had revealed to them. In the days that are coming faithfulness to principle will certainly be required, but we shall want other things also. We shall want teachable minds and waiting upon God; we shall want readiness to acknowledge our mistakes, and to correct them.

Lastly, remember that what is true of the life of the Church, is true also of our individual lives. Faith is the primary need—faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. If it is not yet ours, we must never rest until it is. Faith is the gift of God. When St. Peter came to believe, our Lord told him that flesh and blood had not revealed to him the truth, but the Father in heaven. But we have our own part to do in seeking for faith. We must study the Lord day by day, as He is revealed to us in the Gospel story. We cannot believe in One of whom we know next to nothing. St. Peter came to believe through the knowledge which He acquired of the Lord by living with Him. It was this that the Father used for his illumination. We, too, must acquire knowledge of the Lord, if the Father is to bring us to faith. And, secondly, we must obey the Lord, as we come to understand His commands. It is those who “do the truth” who “come to the light.” Yes! faith must come first. And then, having the faith, we must act upon it. We must listen for the Lord’s calls, and let Him act through us in His own way. Sometimes, like St. Peter in to-day’s Gospel, we may have just to go on with our daily work, and listen to His teaching; sometimes He will call us to thrust out a little from the land, and sometimes to launch out into the deep, and do in His strength and at His call what we have failed to do without them. But whatever the Lord’s calls may prove to be, the conduct of our lives must be in His Hands, not in ours; we ourselves have but to listen and obey.



## SERMON XIX

### SAUL

*(The Sixth Sunday after Trinity)*

2 Sam. i. 21

“ Ye mountains of Gilboa,  
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you, neither fields of  
offerings :  
For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away,  
The shield of Saul, as of one not anointed with oil.”

THERE are, brethren, in the Bible few poems more beautiful than the lament of David over Saul and Jonathan. How wonderful it is that David, persecuted by Saul as he had been, should speak of him as he speaks here ! Yet how little after all he is able to say ! Saul was a great soldier—swift as an eagle, strong as a lion. His success enriched his people while it lasted. Now all is over, and how much has come of it ? The glory of Israel has been slain upon her high places, and all is as if he had never been. The Philistines are masters, not the people of God. The Divine call, the Divine enabling, has all gone for nothing. The shield of the mighty has been vilely cast away ; the shield of Saul, as though the consecrating oil had never touched him.

#### I

We will consider this morning the story of a tragic failure. If the song of the bow was to be taught to the children of Judah, it should be taught also to you and to me. This story of Saul comes to us from far-off

days, and yet it is a living story, a story full of warning to each one of us. Saul, as he first comes before us, is one of the most attractive figures in Hebrew history—splendidly handsome, splendidly brave, splendidly vigorous in action, and as modest and placable as he is courageous and strong. Yes, and there is more than this. Saul is not left simply with his natural powers. He has a call from God to his office, and a rich endowment of God's Spirit; and in the power of that call and that endowment he can do what apart from them he could not do. The deliverance of Jabesh-Gilead is one of the finest feats in the Bible story. Everything seems to foretell a career full of permanent blessing to the people over whom he is called to rule. And yet almost immediately the bright promise becomes overcast. The modest, placable, brave, and brilliant soldier becomes a gloomy and savage tyrant, abandoned by the Spirit of God, and dominated by a frantic jealousy of the man who by Saul's own fault is taking his place. To this jealousy everything is sacrificed—his religion, his work as a king, even his family life; and at last, when the end has come, David with all his generosity can say no more than we find in the song of the bow.

Now why was this? It was because Saul, in spite of all his splendid qualities, was lacking in personal religion. Saul believed in God, and trusted God up to a certain point. What he never seemed to understand was that, however great God's gifts to us may be, there can be no enduring bond between ourselves and Him, unless we give to Him our hearts and wills. What he appeared unable to grasp was that, if God says that a certain thing must be done, it must be done; not something which may seem to us as good or better, not something which is "practically" the same, but the exact thing which God demands of us. Saul cared greatly for the Divine support; its withdrawal broke his heart; but he was never ready to pay that exact obedience, which is the necessary price

of its continuance. He always wanted popularity, and always wanted immediate success; and when exact obedience seemed likely to lead to the sacrifice of either, he had not enough religion to keep him faithful to his duty. From this all the rest followed—the loss of his calling, the loss of his power, the ruin of his spiritual and moral and mental health, his mad jealousy, his failure as a king, and his final overthrow.

## II

Let us look at this a little more in detail. The story of Saul is too long for me to deal with it to-day; I hope that you will read it for yourselves; but let me illustrate my meaning by some incidents in his life.

We see, then, Saul's lack of personal religion almost at the outset of his career. We must remember that at this time the commands of God to His people came in the main through the words of His prophets. For Saul to obey God meant in practice to obey His word by the mouth of Samuel. This was just what Saul would not do. He was bidden, for example, before attacking the Philistines, to wait for Samuel to offer the sacrifice. But Samuel delayed; Saul's army seemed to be melting away; and so, against the express command that had been laid upon him, he offered the sacrifice himself. Why not, we say? Because if we would approach Almighty God, we must come to Him in the way in which He has bidden us to come. But that is what Saul did not recognize. He was afraid of failure, and sooner than risk it, he set God's command aside.

Take another example. Saul is again going out to battle, and again the blessing of God is being sought. But the moment for action seems to have come, and Saul cannot wait. He thinks, as so many of us think to-day, that if only he is active in the service of God, it does not much matter about his prayers; and he says to the priest, "Withdraw thy hand." The result

was what we might have expected. Having lost touch with God, he was left to his own foolishness, and came near to causing the death of his son.

Take another example. Saul was sent to destroy the savage and murderous tribe of the Amalekites, and he and his people were distinctly forbidden in any way to enrich themselves by the fulfilment of their commission. Surely this is not hard to understand. Necessary as the destruction of Amalek was, it would be demoralizing to the Israelites, unless they felt themselves to be simply the executioners of God. But Saul could not bear to do the unpopular thing. His people wished to enrich themselves, and so Saul allowed them to do it. When Samuel blames him, Saul asserts that he has performed the Lord's command. "Practically," he says, he has performed it; the question of the spoil is a matter of detail. Even when he does admit his fault he will not admit it publicly. Samuel must act as if he had done no wrong; he must "honour him before the elders of his people." You see the fundamental evil that spoils Saul's character. He cannot treat a command as a command, and faithfully obey it. He cannot sacrifice popularity or success for God's sake. So of course he was rejected. A man of that stamp is useless for the fulfilment of God's purpose, and Samuel is bidden to anoint David in his place.

Now observe what followed. Left to himself by God, Saul at once lost his power. The Spirit of the Lord departed from him, and could never be recovered. That surely was what lay at the root of Saul's fits of madness. Of course, there are plenty of people, who are healthy-minded, and do useful work, without any special presence of the Spirit of God. But if we have once known the powers of the Spirit, we can never again be healthy-minded and useful without them. Saul was always longing for a Divine light and power that were no longer his. That was why he was ever desiring dreams and messages from God, and was

maddened by his failure to obtain them. That was why at last he turned to spiritualism. He would not obey God, and yet he wanted to be in touch with the unseen world none the less.

That was one side of his misery; now observe the other. Having lost God, he lost men too. Saul having failed, David was raised up to do his work; and, the powers of the Spirit being now David's, the mastery of men which depended upon those powers passed to David with them. But this Saul could not endure. Popularity and success had been everything to Saul; and, when they passed to another, he was filled with a frantic jealousy, which in time swallowed up almost every other feeling. Saul was not morose or jealous by nature, but he could not endure to be second, where he had once been first. So he acted in the way which the Bible describes. He plotted against David; he tried to murder him; he turned against Jonathan, and murdered the priests, because they were David's friends. He hunted him, as David says, like a partridge on the mountains. He became a mere faction-leader instead of a king. And at last, when the day of trial came, and the Philistines attacked him, he had lost all hope of victory, and his kingdom went down in darkness and blood.

### III

Well, it is an awful story. And, my brethren, it has been repeated a thousand times; it may be repeated to-day in you and in me. Why are we here in God's world? Why, if not for this, that we may do, each in his place, a work for God and for our brethren? We cannot do it by our own mere natural powers; we can no more do a great work for God by mere natural powers than we can think with our muscles. But if we are ready and desirous to serve Him, God will call us to His service, and enable us for His service. He will give us—may we not say that He has given us already?—the powers of His Spirit that



we may be able to serve Him. Only let us understand this—we must be ready to pay the price. We must be ready, whatever it may cost us, simply to obey. Which do you care for most—this is the question—the doing of God's work, or the credit, the popularity, the success, which you gain for yourself by doing it? Of course, we like to succeed. Who does not? Of course we care for the love and the appreciation of those among whom we live. To say that we must not care for it is nonsense; a man who did not care would be a man without human sympathies. Only let us understand this. The doing of God's will must come first. We can live, if we will, in a Divine companionship, and with a Divine support, but if we desire that, we must not haggle about the price. What God tells us to do must be done—not something like it, but the thing itself. And if at times that means the loss of our popularity, and seeming failure, then we must, whatever it costs us, accept the unpopularity and the seeming failure as God's will for us, and serve Him none the less.

Brethren, think of the Lord. He knew what popularity was; there was a time early in His ministry when great crowds followed Him. And our Lord, like all who have loving hearts, cared for His popularity. Those pathetic words to His disciples, "Will ye also go away?" are not the words of one who cared not whether they stayed or went. But the call of God, the command of God with Him came first. His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. If that meant seeming failure, if it meant that the crowds fell away, and His own followers were offended in Him, and that at last He had to meet torture and death alone, our Lord obeyed the Father none the less. He knew that true victory would come through seeming defeat, and that it is only he who is ready to lose his life, who in the highest sense can save it. So it must be with all of us. Immediate success is good, and popularity is good—the more that men

love us, the better we can serve them. But we must care for neither, as we care for the will of God. And if we ask how we, weak and hesitating as we know ourselves to be, can ever be strong enough to obey God rather than men, I believe that the answer lies in the life of daily prayer and communion with Him. Why is it that in the hour of temptation we so often love the praise of men more than the praise of God? It is because men are real to us, and God is not. And why is it that men are real to us, and God is not? It is because day by day and all day long we are speaking to men, acting with men, thinking of men, while we neglect to think of God, to speak to God, and to act with the simple object of pleasing Him. The life of prayer is the remedy. If you want to avoid Saul's failure, begin by avoiding his delusion that prayer does not matter. God will never be real to you, unless you pray. You must pray, however difficult you find it, till He becomes real. You must continue to pray that He may remain real. Yes, and in another way prayer will help us. Prayer is the one thing, in which it is easy to think only of pleasing God : and, if we in prayer acquire the power to think of God only, we shall find it easier to put God first in other things. Would it not be well for us all, if on our holiday we gave much time to prayer? Here by the sea, we have everything to refresh our bodies and to refresh our minds. Do not our spirits need refreshment also, and shall we not give time to their refreshment? "Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return unto the Lord, for He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Then in the moment of temptation—the moment when the question comes, "Man's will or God's?"—we shall not vilely cast away our shields; we shall remember our consecration, and act worthily of it.

## SERMON XX

### WEALTH

*(The Ninth Sunday after Trinity)*

Luke xvi. 9

“ Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.”

THERE are two classes of difficulties which meet us in the interpretation of Scripture. There are the difficulties of the head, and the difficulties of the heart. The mind most certainly does not always find Scripture easy to understand. The Bible is not an easy book; neither the life it describes, nor the language it employs, is that of our own day. We need the Christian scholar to make the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. But then when the scholar's work is done, there is often a deeper difficulty. As our Lord said, we do not understand His speech, because we cannot hear His word. Understanding demands sympathy, and our sympathy with the mind of God is at best imperfect. Here the scholar cannot help us. We only come to understand the Divine word as we learn to know God better. If we cannot enter into the mind of our teacher, his words are almost sure to seem unintelligible.

#### I

Now, brethren, both these difficulties meet us in the parable of the Unjust Steward. It is not easy for the head, and it is perhaps still less easy for the heart. How

will the Christian scholar explain it? It is a parable, he will tell us, of the right use of wealth. God is the landlord of the parable, and man is the steward. All that we have—our wealth especially—is God's, and not our own; we are but stewards entrusted for a time by God with that which is His, and answerable to Him for the use we make of it. And to the ears of God there ever rises the accusation that we are wasting His goods. We squander them upon our lusts and pleasures; we do little or nothing with them to make the world any better. So we are summoned to our Master's presence. "What is this that I hear of thee? Render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward." And the parable goes on to point out the one resource which remains to us. We are to use our wealth while we may to make friends for eternity. The steward in the parable is a rascal, but he is a clever rascal. He makes friends everywhere with his master's money. Even his master applauds him, so clever is he. And our Lord bids us to display a similar wisdom. Wealth, He tells us, is the mammon of unrighteousness; it is generally both unjustly gained and unjustly used. But still we may use it for others. In that world to which we are going the poor are a power: "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God." Happy shall we be if we have friends at court. "I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." Thus far the Christian scholar; and the help he gives us is certainly of value. We might have supposed that "the Lord" who commended the Unjust Steward was the Lord Jesus Christ, and we see now that it was not He but the steward's master, the lord in the parable. Worse still, we might have thought that our Lord, when He said, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," meant that we were to make money our friend, and we see now that His meaning is that we are to make friends for

eternity by the right use of money. And yet I do not think that such an explanation leaves us altogether satisfied. The difficulties of the head may have passed away, but the difficulties of the heart remain. We feel that the parable is at once both too high for us and too low for us. The sacrifice which it asks is too high, and the motive it suggests too low. What exactly is the mind of our Master as to wealth? Let us consider to-day His teaching as a whole. Then perhaps the difficult parable may find its place and its meaning.

## II

Now, brethren, we surely cannot look with any care at the life of our Lord without seeing that the passion of His life was to do the Father's will. He did not think first of men but of God. God, He was certain, had a grand purpose for the world, for which He was ever working; and we men were here to understand and help forward that purpose, and at last find our joy in its complete accomplishment. Beautiful as the world was, it was not yet that kingdom of God for which we are looking. The kingdom of God was at hand, but it was not here yet. We all had to work for it, and all the resources of the world were but means by which to do so. Wonderfully free God had left us to do as we would with His marvellous world; never was an earthly steward left with a freer hand. But God expected of us that we should use our freedom under a deep sense of the purpose for which the world was made; He expected that we should not waste, but develope, His property; and, if we disappointed His expectations, He could only say to us, with a kind of Divine astonishment, "What is this that I hear of thee? render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward." Very patient is God, very willing to give us time to learn our business, and perform it. But He and His world do not exist for us; on the contrary, we and the world exist for



Him; and if the steward will not do his work, the steward must be turned away.

We look again at the life and words of the Lord, and we see Him filled with a sense of the great place which we men and women are intended to occupy in the kingdom of the future, and of the greatness of the eternal joy which God has put within our reach. The kingdom of God when it comes will not only fulfil the Father's purpose; it will bring unspeakable blessedness to all who inherit it. And our Lord's view of earthly wealth followed from this. What He felt about it was its unimportance. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The man who holds to God will not so much "hate" wealth as "despise" it. Our Lord felt not so much that we had no right to the pleasures which wealth puts within our reach, but that by the very nature which God had given us we had a right to something infinitely better. It was not our Lord's way to express pity for the poor so much as pity for the rich. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Wealth was "unrighteous," not only because it was so often unjustly gained and unjustly used, but also because it blinded the eyes of almost all who possessed it to the "true riches" for which they were made. When the rich young ruler was bidden to sell what he had and give to the poor, and turned away sorrowful, our Lord's pity went out, not to the poor who might have been benefited by his wealth, but to the rich man himself, who was losing the joy that God had intended for him. His mind fastened not on the happiness of which the rich man was depriving others, but upon the far greater happiness of which he was so cruelly depriving himself. When He said, "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation," He spoke surely more in pity than in anger. What He felt was "the deceitfulness of riches," the horrible imposture which they exercise upon those who possess them. Why then, we may ask, does God

permit us to have them? Just that He may see whether we are fit for anything better. Small or great, they are like the pocket-money, which a wise father gives to his growing boys to see the use that they will make of it. Of course, it is nothing at all to what they will have one day, but the use which they make of it is the test of their characters and capacities; rightly employed, it trains and develops both. The father learns for what they are fit, and learns also, as he could not otherwise learn, how to make his will. So it is, the Lord says, with the wealth of the world. They are "a very little thing"; they are, like the pocket-money, "that which is another's." There is such a thing as "the true riches," the riches which will be "our own," because they are that for which our nature is made, and in which it will find its true blessedness. But if we cannot use this miserable pocket-money in a proper way, we shall never be trusted with anything better. And the misery that oppresses the Lord's mind is just this, that ninety-nine rich people out of a hundred have not the least grasp of the situation. They take so grovelling a view of their nature and capacity, that they suppose themselves fit for nothing better than what they already have. Instead of developing their personalities for eternity, they lose what little personality they once possessed. More and more they become useless for the Divine purpose, and unfitted for the Divine kingdom of love and mutual dependence. They cannot dig, and to beg they are ashamed.

Now what can be a greater disaster than this? Looked at even from the point of view of pure selfishness what can be more miserable than to gain the whole world and forfeit "ourselves"? What a profound truth is contained in the English idiom, by which we say that we enjoy ourselves! Yes, it is ever true that what we enjoy is ourselves, and that we can enjoy nothing else. It is so in the lowest things, and it is so also in the highest. What is it, for example, which the sportsman enjoys? He enjoys himself, the exercise

of his own skill and his own activity. The same game which is the delight of the man who can play it brings nothing but annoyance to the man who cannot. What is it that the artist and the musician enjoy? They, too, enjoy themselves, the exercise of their own faculties, those delicate harmonies of colour and sound which their faculties enable them to create and to appreciate. And what is it that the saint enjoys? In a true sense, he, too, enjoys himself, the perfect exercise of his love and devotion upon the one Being Who is worthy of them. Always, you see, we enjoy ourselves, and our power of enjoyment depends entirely upon our own character and personality, upon the powers that we bring to the feast that God has spread for us. Of what value then can be the increase of our possessions, unless with the increase there comes a growth of those selves of ours which can alone enjoy them? Of what value to the millionaire, who has stunted his soul in the pursuit of wealth, is the gallery of pictures that he has never learned to appreciate, or the magnificent library whose treasures he never cares to open? He can only enjoy himself, and if his self is a bad or a stunted self, the possession of the whole world will profit him not one whit. And, brethren, though our Lord appeals to higher motives, He appeals to this consideration also: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what should a man give to buy back his soul?" Brethren, there is nothing that we can give to buy it back. And if we find that our wealth—or anything that we have, be it our right eye or our right hand, as the Lord said—if we find that it makes us, our real selves, the poorer and the smaller, if it checks our spiritual growth, and dulls our spiritual activities, there is nothing for it but to get rid of it as soon as we may.

We pass to a third characteristic of the life and teaching of our Master; and that is His profound sense that man was never made to be alone, His sense that our true joy lies not in any selfish pleasure, but in love,

in the perfection of our relations to God our Father and to men our brothers. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us. . . . And the glory which thou hast given Me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one." Jesus was ever our peacemaker; our peacemaker with God, and with man also. He came to draw all together in a holy brotherhood. And He looked out into the world, and everywhere He saw the unrighteous mammon as the greatest enemy of the work which He came to do, the greatest rival in our hearts of the love of God, the greatest source of the hatred and bitterness under which the world is groaning. What He desired was to wrest this great instrument out of the enemy's hand, and to use it to build the palace of love. Ah! what an instrument it might be, if only it were rightly used! "A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth it prospereth." "A gift in secret pacifieth anger, and a present in the bosom strong wrath." "A man's gift maketh room for him." So said the wise man, who knew this world alone. And Jesus, Who knew the other world also, said that what made room for us here would make room for us there. "Make to yourselves friends"—ah, friends, not enemies as now—"make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacle." That is the true purpose of this unrighteous mammon; it is to forge the chains of love, to bind man to man in mutual service, and in binding them one to another, to bind them also to God. "That they may receive you." There is a beautiful story by Rudyard Kipling called "They." It tells how the souls of the children came to dwell with the blind girl who loved them. Jesus says not that, but something better. "They" will not return to us, but we shall go to them. The eternal

tabernacles are the tabernacles of love, and our place in them will be the place which our love has prepared for us.

### III

You see then, brethren, the mind of Jesus Christ about wealth. It is God's, He says, and to be used in God's purposes; it is the very little thing by which we are tested, to see if we may be trusted with anything better; it is the means of forging for eternity the links of love. Surely when we take this teaching as a whole, our difficulties about the parable for the most part pass away. It may begin with the prudence of this world, but it ends with the kingdom of love. Why did our Lord say that the lord of the unjust steward commended him, because he had done wisely? Was it not that He might assure us of the Divine approval in all our acts of love to our fellow-men? Mercy is not twice blest only, but thrice." It blesses him that gives and him that takes; it gives joy to God, Whose love rests alike on both. It was not easy to express all this in an earthly story, but the Lord found a way. He spoke to us of a rich man, who had both wealth enough, and humour enough, to appreciate his steward's cleverness, even though it was at his own expense. So speaking He taught us not to despair as we think of our past unfaithfulness, but to look at the burdens and anxieties of our fellow-servants, and see if we cannot reduce them from one hundred to fifty or at most fourscore. Our Master will approve both our wisdom and our charity.



## SERMON XXI

### PRIDE

*(The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity)*

Luke xviii. 11 and 1 Cor. xv. 10

“ God, I thank Thee, that I am not as the rest of men.”

“ By the grace of God I am what I am.”

THE Church, brethren, is very bold to-day; in the Epistle and the Gospel she puts St. Paul and the Pharisee side by side. Very similar at first sight do their words seem to be. If the Pharisee thanks God for what he is, so does St. Paul; if he contrasts himself with others, so does St. Paul. And yet the boldness of the Church is a very wise boldness, for it is the very resemblance between the two which makes the contrast so striking and so instructive. That which the Pharisee has in common with the Apostle is not pride; that which is peculiar to himself is.

#### I

We think, then, this morning of pride, the first and the worst of the seven deadly sins. How subtle pride is! How little we often understand it! We confuse it with vainglory, a totally different sin. We confuse it with conceit, which is not a sin at all. To be vain-glorious is to put the approbation and praise of man into a place which does not belong to it; it is to love the praise of men more than the praise of God. To do that is doubtless to dishonour God, and to sin against Him; but it is not pride. Conceit is a false opinion about ourselves, our position, our character,

our capacity. A false opinion may be a misfortune, but it is not a sin; and we ought never to treat conceit as sin, when we think that we detect it in others. How can it be necessarily more blameworthy to have a false opinion about ourselves than to have a false opinion about other men? There is not one of us who knows, or can know, whether he is conceited or not. Here, as elsewhere, our desire and our effort should be to discover the truth, but how far we have succeeded in doing so it is beyond our power to know. Conceit has no necessary connection with pride. A conceited man may be free from pride, and a proud man free from conceit. Where, then, you will say, lies the difference? Conceit has its home in the mind; pride has its home in the will. Conceit is unconscious, and involuntary; pride is conscious and deliberate. It consists, as our Lord says in to-day's Gospel, in the wilful exaltation of ourselves, in the deliberate adoption towards God and towards our fellow-men of an attitude inconsistent with truth and inconsistent with love. To be proud is of set purpose to close our eyes to the plain facts of our weakness, our dependence, and our sin, to refuse to own to them either in word or in deed, to treat God and man as if we had no need of them and no obligation towards them, to trust in ourselves that we are righteous, and set all others at nought. It is to make ourselves our own centre, and our own circumference, to build round ourselves a wall of self-chosen isolation, to say—by act, if not by word—to God, "Depart from me," and to man, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier"—or more intellectual, or better-born—"than thou." It matters comparatively little whether our opinion about ourselves be true or false; pride lies not in our opinion about ourselves, but in our attitude towards others. No one surely ever had so high a conviction of his own position and calling as our Lord Jesus Christ; no one ever expressed more plainly what his view of himself really was. And yet no one was ever so

absolutely free from pride, so confessedly dependent upon God, so brotherly and approachable to all with whom he had to do. If He hated pride with so burning a hatred, it was because it was of all sins the most contrary to His own spirit, of all sins the most deadly foe of all that He came to do. Here in to-day's Gospel He draws with a master-hand the proud man's portrait. Let us look at it, and learn to hate pride as the Lord hated it.

## II

We look, then, at the Pharisee, and see him first in his relation to God. "Two men"—he was but a man after all—"went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself." Perfectly at home he feels himself in the Divine Presence; he is made for the Temple, and the Temple for him. What will he say now that he is there? "God, I thank thee I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast thrice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get." That, says our Lord with splendid irony, is his prayer. To whom is it addressed? To God in appearance, but to himself in fact. He stood and prayed thus with *himself*—what had God to do with it? He goes over for the thousandth time the roll of his own perfections; he holds them up against the dark background of "the rest of men"; then he has done. How should the Pharisee pray? He admits no failure in the past; he has nothing to desire for the future; it never occurs to him to pray for any one else. It is not that the Pharisee is mistaken about these outward facts of his life; his statements about himself are as accurate as the multiplication table. But by some strange alchemy of pride he has managed to use that law of God, which ought to have humbled him to the dust, and cast him upon God, as the means of self-exaltation before Him. Now, my brethren, how is it possible for us

to arrive at such a condition of soul as this? We arrive at it because we desire to arrive at it. Pride's Babel-tower is not built in a day, but with time and care we can rear it. Turn your eyes resolutely away from all that might humiliate you; never confess your sins or your blunders, even to yourself; never admit them when they are pointed out to you; adopt a moral standard of your own—not too difficult—and refuse to consider any higher one; contrast your conduct, not with the real demands of your conscience, but with the conduct of others who are without a tithe of your knowledge or your advantages. When the message of the Gospel reaches you, that message which offers you the Divine forgiveness because you need it, and insists upon your confessing that you do need it, refuse that message; and in time you will have your desire. You will successfully attain the conviction that you are all that you can reasonably be expected to be, and be able, like the Pharisee, to stand up before God and say so. You will feel yourself in no need of His saving power; and not seeking it, you will not have it.

We see, then, the Pharisee in his relation to God; now let us look at him in his relation to his fellow-men. "God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." "The rest of men"—inimitable phrase! All that wonderful sea of human life around him, that wonderful sea where he would find no two faces alike, no two experiences alike, all his brothers and sisters in their infinite variety—what are they to the Pharisee? They are just "the rest of men." That is the proud man's world—himself and "the rest." He has no interest in them, no sympathy for them. "Extortioners, unjust, adulterers." The world is a cess-pool of dishonesty and immorality. And when one poor man—this publican—comes for a moment before him, he is promptly dismissed as just one of the crowd, like the rest, only more so. The evil of the world

stirs the Pharisee to no action and to no intercession; he neither prays nor pities. Rather that evil is a comfort to him, as it makes his own attainment seem all the brighter. He has killed all sympathy, and is conscious of no responsibility. And you and I, brethren, can we ever attain to the Pharisee's attitude? Not easily, thank God, since we begin as men and women with human sympathies. But we can kill them, if we take the trouble. Shall I tell you how? Always think of men in classes—the upper classes, the middle classes, the lower classes, this publican. Never let yourself be interested in anybody as an individual; never think about his difficulties or his temptations. Take the moral standard such as it is, that you find easy to yourself, and judge everybody else by it. If you find men dishonest, assume that it is just as easy for men to be honest, who don't know where to turn for their next meal, as it is for you, who have everything that you want. If you find men immoral, assume that it is just as easy for them to be moral living five in a room, and with immorality all round them from their earliest years, as it is for you in a wide house, and with little to stimulate your baser passions. Always take it for granted that, if people are poor, it is their own fault; and that if people are wicked, it is because they wish to be wicked. Be particular about this, otherwise you may be troubled by the fact that you do nothing for them. Then in time you may be as comfortable as the Pharisee, quite self-satisfied, and quite untroubled by the evil of the world. You will be able to go through life alone, and through death alone, to be as friendless on the other side of death as you have been on this side.

### III

And now, brethren, contemplate another picture. The picture of the Apostle St. Paul. He, too, thanks God for what he has come to be; he compares himself



with others, and draws again and again a very dark picture of the world. But how does he bear himself before God and men? Let us look and see.

How, firstly, does he bear himself before God? Brethren, when he thanks God for what he is, he means that thanksgiving. St. Paul never forgets his past. God has forgiven him—of that he is sure. God has been, and is, most wonderfully with him. But what of the past? "I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." I was before "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." And what of the future? Ah! how much there is yet to do! "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." God has a purpose for him—of that he is sure; so high is what God means him to be, that St. Paul cannot even understand it yet. He must press onward, onward, ever onward—what he has done is nothing. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." That is his way—for the past abiding penitence, for the future a hunger and thirst after righteousness that will never find its satisfaction here. And so, before God, utter humility, dependence upon the grace which has brought him to where he is, and can alone bring him to where he hopes to be.

And then men, how does he bear himself towards them? St. Paul never forgets the sin of the world, or explains it away. "There is none righteous, no not one." But the clearness of his vision never makes him hard, and never makes him hopeless; it spurs him to untiring labour and to untiring intercession. "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise." If God has lifted him just a little above the world, it is

that, like his Master, he may draw the world after him. If there are barriers, he desires them to fall. If he is in the light, while others are in the darkness, he wants the light to shine upon them. "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." A noble desire—all men are to share his happiness, while escaping his sufferings. You see how he despairs of no man; you see how he longs that all should be as he is; you see how he feels himself bound to do all within his power to make them so.

And, brethren, what was it that changed Paul the Pharisee into the Paul whom here we see? Was it not just the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ? The Pharisee was proud, but he thought that God was proud. He thought that God, too, was sufficient for Himself, a gigantic Egoist, raised far above all contact with this sinful and suffering world, judging all by one exacting law, condemning all but a few Pharisees. St. Paul was humble because He had learned that God was humble. He had learned that, though God was infinitely high, He was also infinitely near. In Christ God had Himself come down to the world, into the midst of its madness and its sin, come down to share its burden. He had said to publicans and sinners as well as to Pharisees, not "Stand by thyself," but "Come unto Me"; He had done all that was possible, while respecting their freedom, to make them come. How could St. Paul believe that, and yet continue in his pride; and how can you and I? Oh! brethren, what was the Incarnation, and what was the Atonement, but God telling us that He is not as this Pharisee? Let us think of ourselves as we will. What is the difference between you or me and any one else in the world in position, in knowledge, in character, compared with the difference between us all and God? Differences look small from a great height; if anything could be invisible to the eyes of

God, these differences one from another, on which we pride ourselves, would be so. And yet in His infinite humility God has come to us to redeem all by His Son, and to dwell in all by His Spirit. If God despises no one, I do not see how we can do so. If God is humble, I do not see how we can well be proud.

## SERMON XXII

### THE GOOD SAMARITAN

*(The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity)*

Luke x. 25, 29

“ Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ”  
“ Who is my neighbour? ”

THE Gospel for the day contains four questions. Two were put by a lawyer to our Lord, and two by our Lord to the lawyer. The Lord's questions are asked to lead the lawyer to the answers to his own. In the law, which the lawyer professed to know, he had the answer to his first question; in his own conscience, with the help of our Lord's beautiful parable, he had the answer to his second. “ Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ” “ What is written in the law? How readest thou? ” “ Who is my neighbour? ” “ Which of these, then, thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers? ” Now the lawyer's questions are questions of abiding importance to every one of us. There is no one, whose hopes rise at all above this present world, who does not need to know what he must do to inherit eternal life. There is no one, who knows the true answer, that love is the way to life, who does not need to know whom he must love, and how. And I think we shall find that, when the second question is answered, a third will rise beyond it, and that our Lord's words, taken in their deepest meaning, will answer this third question as well as the first and the second.

## I

We begin, then, with the lawyer's first question. "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Eternal life, life that is real and lasting, like the life of God, how are we to attain to it? Do our ordinary actions look as if they would lead us to it? The vast majority of them have for their object simply the continuance of our present life, and that of those dependent upon us. We are working for our living, as we truly say—for our present living, not our eternal living. Our work attains its end when we and ours have food and clothing and roofs over our heads. But all these things, as the Apostle says, "are to perish with the using." Evidently we have nothing permanent here. Many of our other actions are aimed simply at pleasure—harmless, healthy pleasure, perhaps, but still simply pleasure. And pleasures, too, have nothing permanent about them. They glow for a moment, like the matches we strike in a dark room; then they go out, and we are where we were before. Of course, to say this is not to condemn our daily toil or our daily pleasures either; it is simply to point out that there is nothing in either to lead us to eternal life. What then must we do to inherit eternal life? Now our Lord, as we have seen, referred the lawyer to the law, and the law enabled him to give the right answer. Life, eternal life, comes through love. We must love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our strength, and with all our minds, and our neighbours as ourselves. But why will love lead to eternal life? It is not that eternal life is attached to love in any arbitrary way; it is not that God says: "Love Me and love your neighbour, and I will give you eternal life for your reward." The connection between love and life is far closer than that; eternal life is the life of God, and God is love. "God is love," says St. John, "and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God abideth in him." To be



full of love is to be full of God, and if our life is one with the life of God, it must be as eternal as He. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." Do you say that all this is mysticism, and that it has no meaning for the ordinary man? If you think so, brethren, consult your experience. Suppose that you commit some action of abominable selfishness. What is the result? You find immediately that you have struck a blow at your own deepest life. Suppose that, on the other hand, you make some great sacrifice for another's sake. What is the result? At once your deepest self expands; you find yourself in a new way real and living. Eternal life is not something that belongs to a distant world; eternal life begins now. Eternal life is close to us, waiting for an entrance, and it is by love that we let it in. What says St. Paul as he speaks to Timothy about the rich? "Charge them that are rich in this present world . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed." You see how love and life go together. The more of love, the more of God; and the more of God, the more of the life that is life indeed. That is why sacrifice means not losing our life, but saving it.

## II

You see then the answer to the first question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And now we pass to the second: "Who is my neighbour?" If love is the way to life, whom shall we love and how? It is easy to talk about it, but how shall we practise it? And our Lord tells us by His beautiful story that our neighbour is the man who is at hand and needing us, and that love lies in devoting our powers to satisfying

his need. Consider these points one by one. Is there one of us whose conscience is not reached by these words of the Gospel? "He desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" No one is easy in his mind when love is mentioned. Love—oh, yes, of course we must exercise love. But the question is where and how. How shall we justify our ordinary conduct? There are these, we say, who have a claim upon us, and those who have none. How can we fulfil our duties to the former if we think too much about the latter? And our Lord says: "Never mind men's claims; consider their needs. What claim had a naked, bleeding, dying Jew upon that Samaritan? He was a man of alien and detested race, a man in the Samaritan's eyes of heretical religion; but he was there, and therefore the universal call to love took shape in him." That is what we all need to realize, is it not? The grand opportunity for unselfish love is the man with whom we have nothing in common but the fact of neighbourhood, and therefore the more plentiful such men are around us, the greater is our opportunity for inheriting eternal life. May I apply this for a moment to our own circumstances? People sometimes speak with contempt of life in a small town like Ely, as if it were a narrow life hindering the development of those who live it; on the contrary, it ought to be a life of splendid breadth and fullness. It is not the life of Ely that is narrowing, it is the life of such a place as London. For consider. It does not matter where you live in London. You may live in Whitechapel, or you may live in Berkeley Square; but, wherever you live, you will find yourself surrounded by people just like yourself. Look at the houses in an East London street, or a West London square, and observe that abominable sameness. And then look at the houses in St. Mary's Street or in the Market Place at Ely. How the rich and the poor meet together, and God is the Maker of them all! What continual opportunities for a wider outlook and a broader

sympathy! How narrow and poor is life in London, and how wide and rich ought to be life in Ely! What a strange phenomenon to London eyes must be the absence of numbers on the doors of an Ely street! We know, or are supposed to know, each other too well to need them! Who is my neighbour? He is the man who is there. Does he need my help? Perhaps not at the moment. Where help is not needed, it does harm to give it. It is best for us all to overcome our own difficulties, if we can overcome them. But if he does need me, then neighbourhood is the one sufficient call. People say that, in these little towns, nobody minds his own business. Quite so. That is the glory of them. That is why they are like heaven. In heaven, no one minds his own business. No one has any business that is only his own. Each lives for all, and all for each. So it should be even here below. The priest in the parable minded his own business; the Levite minded his own business; the Samaritan found his business in his neighbour's need. That is neighbourhood. And, when the need is there, what does love mean? It means seeing the neighbour through, loving with all the heart and mind and soul and strength. Love says, Do not just touch the difficulty; grasp it, grapple with it, overcome it. There he is by the roadside half dead, that heretic Jew; there is not a moment to be lost. Love him with all your soul certainly; have compassion upon him; but do not stop short there. Set your brain to work for him; love him with your mind. He must have his wounds cleansed, and bound up, or he will bleed to death. True; there is no water and there are no bandages; you have not come out with a first-aid outfit. What does that matter? That bottle of wine hanging over the donkey's neck, ready for your supper; that cruse of oil, ready to rub yourself down when the hot journey is over. The wine will serve to cleanse his wounds, and the oil to soothe them. No bandages? Tear them off your clothes. Get him away as quickly as you can. Up

with him on the donkey's back. Put your arm round him to steady him; love him with your strength. Take him to the nearest inn; sit up all night and look after him. If you must go the next day, see that some one takes your place, pay him well, and tell him there is more where that came from. See the thing through. That is what love means. And with each thing you do, though all unknown to yourself, you will be absorbing the Divine life, laying hold on the life that is life indeed.

### III

And now behind these first two questions there rises a third, on which we can but touch to-day. When we know the way to eternal life, and know also who is our neighbour, the question that remains is, How are these cold, selfish hearts of ours to be so changed as to practise what we know? We do not feel like it; we are full of excuses. There is the poor brother, but times are hard. What is the Church doing? The Church ought to look after him. Well! Christians have believed that our Lord in the Gospel answered this third question also. Do you know how the Christian Fathers interpret this parable? They see in it the picture of the way in which our Lord can and will change us, if we desire to be changed, in just the way that is needed. That poor victim lying by the roadside with his life ebbing away is Everyman; he is you and I. Love is so weak in us, because we, too, have somehow been robbed and wounded—robbed of the union with God, for which we were made, wounded with the deadly wounds of sin after sin. And as we lie in our weakness, the law of God cannot save us. It looks at us, like the priest and the Levite, and passes by on the other side. But Jesus Christ—Jesus Whom His enemies called a Samaritan—has been the good Samaritan to us. He has come down to us, right down to us in our weakness and our sin, and bound up our wounds with the oil of the Spirit, and the wine of His precious Blood.

He has lifted us up, borne us to the inn of His Church, and taken care of us. And, though in one sense He is here no longer, He too, like the Samaritan, will come again. He has left us in the Church all that we require for our healing, charged His servants to minister His remedies to us, and promised to them a rich reward at His return for all that they do for us. We have but to use His remedies, and we shall be nursed back to health and the power of loving. Does that seem to you a fanciful interpretation, beautiful perhaps, but scarcely to be taken seriously? Be it so, if you will. But if so, why did the Fathers adopt it? It shows, at any rate, that that is what the Lord had done for them. They would never have so interpreted the parable if He had not. And if He did it for them, why should He not do it for us? If He does not, how are we to escape from a vicious circle? On the one hand, it is love that leads to life, and on the other hand, it is life that leads to love. I see no way out, except in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We learn to love, by accepting for ourselves the love of Christ. "O taste and see, how gracious the Lord is." "We love, because He first loved us." It will not all be easy then. Sometimes we shall have to make ourselves act when we are disinclined. But the true life will be no longer impossible; the thought of what we have received will make us willing to give. That poor Jew who was picked up by the roadside, gained, we can hardly doubt, not only a new view of Samaritans, but a new view of his own duty. He could not suppose that the powers thus restored to him were meant to be spent for himself alone.



## SERMON XXIII

### THE TWO VOICES

*(The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity)*

2 Kings v. 19 and 27

“ And he said unto him, Go in peace.”

“ The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever.”

How strange a man Elisha seems to be ! Here, on the one hand, is Naaman, the servant of a false God, the enemy of Elisha's country. Elisha is all kindness to him. His leprosy is healed and healed freely ; not a silver piece will Elisha take ; even the worship of Rimmon is not altogether forbidden to him. Here, on the other hand, is Gehazi, Elisha's own servant, a worshipper like himself of the one true God. There is nothing, nothing, for poor Gehazi. Directly he tries to make a little profit, the curse falls. Surely this seems a strange sort of justice. What an extraordinary laxity on the one side, and rigour on the other !

#### I

Brethren, we see here a great law of the kingdom of God. Its grace, its attractiveness, is for those that are without ; its severity, its tremendous claims, for those that are within. God, you see, must first attract us ; He must show us how gracious, how utterly worthy of our love He is. But when once we have come to know Him, and been drawn near to Him, there is a change. He loves us now no doubt with a special love, beyond that which He gives to the world ; but He does not

always exhibit it quite as we might expect. Outward, worldly blessings, He may give less than to others. Deeper sorrow there will be, though also deeper joy. There is a glorious future before us; we are God's sons, God's heirs, and must be trained for our position; we cannot rule over ten cities, unless we come to have regal souls. Moreover, the kingdom of God has not yet fully come. God has a great work to do in this world of His, and His sons must share it with Him; and so, if we are inside the kingdom, there is a great deal asked of us. God cannot tolerate in us what He tolerates in others. He cannot leave us to enjoy ourselves while there is so much to be done. He asks continually for real work, and real sacrifice. "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments?" They may come by the way if they will, but there is no time to seek for them. Enough for us now to have the happiness of being at one with God, and the honour of working for Him.

## II

We see this, firstly, in the narrative before us. Naaman is treated as he is, because he is so completely outside. This "Syrian ready to perish" with his leprosy, what a type he is of the man of the world, needing something that the Church can give him! The people of God, how he has despised them! But now there is something that he wants, and he is willing to pay for it; and he comes with his train of chariots, his bags of money, and his changes of raiment. How Elisha will be impressed! How honoured he will be to have the privilege of ministering to a person of this quality! "He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and recover the leper." Just so. It is the voice of the world in all ages, when it finds its need of the Church. But Elisha does not take Naaman quite so seriously as this. Naaman is to him "the man"—nothing more and nothing less. What he can

do for him he will gladly do, but he has no use for his money. It is the grace—the free bounty of God—that he wants to teach him. As for all this pomp and circumstance, Elisha has no time for that. He has higher work to do—to pray for his people, it may be—and all that the world can give is not worth as much as the prophet's intercession. Yes! Naaman is outside, but the prophet will do something to draw him nearer. He will show him that there is a prophet in Israel, a real servant empowered by a real God, Who can save those who call upon Him. That will be something for Naaman to learn; that will draw him a step nearer to the light. So there is the grace, the gentleness, that we see. Elisha had to bear witness to the character of his God, and that was his way of doing so.

Ah! but Gehazi—it cannot be so with him. Gehazi knows God, or ought to know Him. He is Elisha's servant, sharing his work, witnessing continually his mighty deeds, one day perhaps destined himself to receive the prophetic mantle, as Elisha had received it from Elijah. So, when instead of working with Elisha, he works against him, when he uses his position to make money for himself, when he destroys the whole lesson that Elisha had been trying to teach, his punishment is prompt and terrible. For what would Naaman think after Gehazi's conduct? Would he not believe, as Gehazi told him, that the servant was but doing the master's bidding? Where would the lesson of God's grace be then?

But now let us leave Elisha, and pass on to our Lord. Ah! surely it was the same with Him. How gracious He too was to those outside the kingdom, how strict with those within! What was He, what was He not, to the crowd without, the crowd that were as sheep having no shepherd, the crowd whom he pitied, but upon whom He could not depend? Never had they known such a teacher, such a friend, such a neighbour to them all. How gracious, how attractive He made God seem! How wonderfully He revealed our Father's

heart towards us ! Here at last was a religious teacher who was not a Pharisee, and not a bigot, a teacher who came to call not the righteous but sinners, who would eat and drink with sinners that he might so call them, a teacher who said that God made His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sent rain upon the just and on the unjust, a teacher who told men to "come unto" him, and not to stand by themselves, for he was holier than they. Here was one who lived as a man among men, who never came but he came to bless, a greater, holier, more wonderful Elisha. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." That was the way of our Lord with the crowd, the crowd that was here to-day and gone to-morrow, that sought Him, not because they saw signs, but because they "ate of the loaves, and were filled."

But now pass from this picture to the picture of the Lord with the Apostles who had given up all for Him. It is Elisha with Gehazi over again ; our Lord almost seems a different Person. No doubt they had blessings such as no one else enjoyed. They were the chosen companions of the King of Kings ; He called them His friends, His brethren. One day, He told them, they should share His kingdom, be with Him where He is, and behold His glory. But for all that they had to wait. Here in this world everything is asked of them, and little given to them. Not a miracle is worked for them, except when their unbelief makes it necessary, and even then they are blamed for needing it. They are no more allowed to enrich themselves than Gehazi was. When they dispute as to who is the greatest, our Lord tells them that unless they are converted and become as little children, they shall not enter into the kingdom at all. When they ask what they will have, He gives them the parable of the Labourers, and points out how, if they try to bargain,

they will receive no more than they have bargained for. They have to live, as the Lord lives, the wandering life of danger and poverty, to deny themselves, to forsake all that they have, to go out at their Master's bidding post-haste in the eastern sun, and salute no man by the way. No sin, no selfishness, no whisper of disobedience is ever tolerated. They must serve the world, not the world them. You see, it is the old principle. Men may hold aloof from Jesus, if they will; they may receive the earthly blessing at His hand, and do nothing in return. But if they want to be one with Him, they must serve, and wait for all else until the kingdom comes.

Brethren, the Church of God speaks, or ought to speak, with the same two voices to-day. One face she turns to the world, and one to her own people, manifesting to the one God's love, to the other His holiness and the greatness of His claims. Oh brethren! in spite of all our failures, is it not so? To the great world without, in town or country, what a friend, what a neighbour, is the Church of God! How familiar sound those words of Elisha to Gehazi, "Run now, I pray thee, to meet her; and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?" It is the voice of the Church to-day, the voice of her ministers and of her district-visitors to the world about them. "How are you? How is your husband? How is your child?" Friendliness, kindness, an interest in all that is going on, the persistent desire to be of use—that is the spirit of the Church. Her children will care for the sick and for the poor; they will interest themselves, like Elisha of old, in questions of food and pure water, and better housing, in the borrowed axe that has fallen into the stream. Everybody regards the Church, and those who especially belong to her, as the natural resource in every difficulty. That, brethren, is our glory. Woe to us of the Church if we do not show that face to the world! The world may not be interested in our life, but we must be inter-



ested in the world's; a brotherhood we are, but a clique we must never be. Freely we have received, freely we must give: not only our music and our architecture, but ourselves, not only our services, but our service. We must stand before the world, as a body that confers benefits, not as a body that asks for them. So only can we show God's love to a world that needs it. Yes, that is the one face. But then the Church has another. Suppose that we are not satisfied with being without, suppose we want to be within; then at once we find a change. There is indeed a warm welcome for us: "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?" But now everything is asked of us. There is work to be done here, there, and everywhere; and, if we are within the Church, it is for us to do it. So there are ceaseless claims upon our time, our thought, our money; we receive the privilege of being put upon. The Church never says, "Do this, and I shall never trouble you again." She gives us sometimes no leisure so much as to eat; she has learned from her Master the Divine audacity of claiming all. Of course we may resent this; we may show that the claims made upon us are a compliment that we do not deserve; if so, the Church will go back to the old method. "How are you? How is your husband? How is your child?" But if you would be within, that is the claim that you must meet. Woe to us if having put our hands to the plough, we look back. Never then shall we be fit for the kingdom of God.

### III

My brothers, those are the two voices; which do you wish to hear? You can have which you will. Will you be inside, or outside? Will you serve Christ and His Church, or be served by them? Will you be outside? If it be so, we shall not judge you. We can live together on that understanding. Perhaps it is our fault for not showing you better the love of God. Will you

be inside? All welcome, but you must understand what it means. You must be generous then; you must not nicely calculate whether you are being asked to do more than others; you must do all that you can. Oh brethren! if it be God we serve, why should we not give all that He asks! Can He not make it good? "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." If we be God's children, then, as St. Paul says, we are God's heirs, and shall we not display the heir's spirit? How does he act, the heir to some great estate? Does he pass through it seizing moment by moment what he can, breaking and pulling up and carrying away, leaving the marks of his presence, the remnants of his feast, to annoy the eyes of all who come after him? It is not the heir who does that, but the trespasser. And, brethren, if you and I pass through this goodly world in the spirit of the trespasser, seizing what we can for ourselves, spoiling more than we enjoy, everywhere, as the Book of Wisdom says, leaving "tokens of our mirth, because this is our portion, and our lot is this," then we are witnesses against ourselves that we are not heirs, but trespassers and thieves, that now or never is our watchword, and we know it.

Oh! brethren, what shall we gain by it? Load our arms as we will with the spoils of the world, we must lay down all that we have gained. We cannot climb the palings of the world; there is but one way out. There at the gate he stands, the dour old lodge-keeper, Death: and he says: "You can put all that down. You brought nothing into the world, and it is certain you can carry nothing out." How different it is with the heir! To and fro he moves in the world, but he does not care to pluck the flowers now. Enough to speak the kindly word to all the tenants, to see how to improve the estate, to learn how one day to govern it. He, too, will pass by the gate, go away to other training grounds till the Church of the firstborn comes of age; but the lodge-keeper has no terrors for him. His features relax into a smile; he bows to the

master. "All things are yours; in the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours"—since ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Brethren, make the nobler choice. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." All the happiness that we can gain from the Church is less than the joy of serving her. Outward things can never satisfy, though it be the Church that gives them. They are but the symbols of what God has for us when the true time comes. Better far to be Gehazi than Naaman; better far to be the Apostles than to belong to the crowd; better far to serve the Church than to be served by her. For "the Son of man" Himself "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

## SERMON XXIV

### ANXIETY

*(The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity)*

Matt. vi. 33, 34

“ Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow : for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

It is, brethren, a deep sympathy which speaks in these words of the Gospel. Our Lord does not forbid anxiety merely because of the suffering which it brings; He forbids it because it prevents a single-hearted devotion to the will of God. But throughout this section of His teaching a great pity underlies His words, and at the end it rises to the surface. Life is not easy, our Lord says. Each day as it comes brings its own trials and difficulties. Do not add to the trials of to-day by anticipating those of to-morrow. For your own sake, as well as for God's, take each day as it comes. “ Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

#### I

Now, brethren, let us begin by understanding how our Lord comes to speak as He does. Our Lord is a teacher, Who goes to the root of things; He deals with causes, and not merely with symptoms. What he desires to see in us all is what He calls “ the single eye,” a mind set upon one thing and one thing only, the doing of the will of God. Is it then enough to tell us that this is what we must have? No, it is not. All of us

find it exceedingly difficult to be single-hearted. Other desires interfere with the desire to do God's will; the love of money especially does so. We attempt the impossible task of serving God and mammon at the same time. And so our Lord does not merely speak to us of the single heart; He goes on to warn us against that which prevents us from obtaining it. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Notice carefully our Lord's exact words. God comes first in each division of the sentence. Two courses are open unto us. We may hate God and love money, or we may hold to God and despise money. If we love money, we are certain to hate God, for God is always standing in our way. His laws are continually interfering with the ways in which we make our money; His claims with the way in which we hoard it. On the other hand, if we love God, we are sure to despise money. We do not hate it; it would be very foolish to do that; but we despise it, we regard it as a very little thing. If it comes to us, we will do our best with it; if it does not, what does it matter? Is that then deep enough for our Lord to go? No, it is not. For why do we love money? Mammon is not in itself a very attractive deity; its most ardent worshippers are generally ashamed of their devotion. The true reason is that we are anxious about the future. We look forward into the future, and it looks dark and dangerous. We begin to say "What shall we eat?" and "What shall we drink?" and "Where-withal shall we be clothed?" and money in the bank makes us feel safe. And so our Lord, that wisest of teachers, sees that, since it is the love of money which prevents singleness of heart, and anxiety about the future which causes our love of money, it is our miserable anxiety with which He must deal, and He proceeds at once to speak of that love and care and providence of God, which make anxiety to His true servants a



thing so foolish and so unnecessary. "Look," He says, "at the birds, and look at the flowers." The birds do not even sow and reap and gather into barns, as you so rightly do. They live from day to day, doing as their God-given instincts bid them, without a thought of the dangers of the future, and your heavenly Father feeds them. The flowers "toil not, neither do they spin," as you so rightly do; they never think of what they are going to wear; yet "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Now consider how far higher you are than the birds and the flowers—higher in yourselves, higher in your destiny, higher in the value that God sets upon you. With the birds life and food are one; with the flowers body and raiment are one; while with you "the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment." You have deeper needs than money can ever satisfy. The grass of the field "to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the furnace;" you are for eternity. Are ye not of much more value than the birds and the flowers? "If God so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Away then with anxiety! Anxiety is for the heathen, who neither know nor serve the heavenly Father. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Be single-hearted. "Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness." Make God the Ruler of your life, and as far as you may, of all other lives; respond to every call that He makes upon you. Then take each day as it comes, live it as simply and naturally as the birds and flowers, and all the things about which you have refused to be anxious will be added unto you.

## II

So, brethren, the Lord speaks. Can we believe Him? Can we act upon His words? Who has the right so to speak to us, if He has not? It is not for the rich to speak to the poor of trust in God, for the rich know

not their anxieties. But who speaks here? It is a carpenter who has abandoned his trade at the call of God, a poor man dependent on the charity of others, a wanderer who has not where to lay his head. It is a preacher with no church but the mountainside, and no hearers but the peasants and artisans of Galilee. It is an envoy of God, whom the leaders of the nation have rejected, and who will end his life on the Cross. What servant of God has ever had greater reason for anxiety than He? Do you say "He had Divine powers?" Of what use was that, when He might not use them for Himself? Those powers were for others, not for the smoothing of His own path. Not for Him, as well He knew, to turn stones into bread, to force God's hand, to gain His Kingdom before the time. And yet, like God Himself, He is "semper agens, semper quietus"—ever active, yet ever at rest. He can sleep in the boat through the fury of the gale; He can be calm when He is the centre of a raging mob. When our Lord speaks of the Father's care, He speaks that which He knows, and testifies that He has seen. He Himself lived not by bread alone, but by every word which proceeded out of the mouth of God. Day by day he trusted the Father with a perfect trust, and day by day He was not disappointed. We can believe Him, brethren, for He speaks from the heart of His own experience, and only calls us to follow where He has gone. And, brethren, are not His words ever borne out by our own experience? What good has anxiety ever done us? Anxiety is the deadly foe of body, mind and spirit alike. Who ever became healthy by anxiety about his health? Who ever became an educated man by anxiety about self-culture? Who ever gained the love of those about him, by anxiety to do the popular thing? Who ever saved his soul by morbid introspection? How often have our fears proved groundless! And when they were not, how much were we helped in the evil day by anxiety before it came? Seek God's kingdom and righteousness;

do bravely what He tells you to do, and all things will work together for good to those who love God. Have we ever done God's will, though with fear and trembling, and found His support fail us? "Look at the generations of old, and see: who did ever put his trust in the Lord and was ashamed? Or who did abide in His fear, and was forsaken? Or who did call upon Him, and He despised Him?" "So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed upon the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. The earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." That is the way. Do God's will; sow the right seed. Then you may securely sleep and securely rise, and the soil of our human life will bring forth fruit of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. If you want to be healthy, keep God's laws of health. Be temperate, be active, really labour for six days and give the seventh to rest and worship. If you are ill, "honour the physician." Seek, and take, the best advice you can obtain, and then think about your health as little as possible. If you want to be educated, use the opportunities that God puts in your way. Read books that will force you to use your brains. Talk to sensible people. Do not waste all your leisure on gossip and novel reading. Try to understand the things which are worth understanding. If you want the love of others, be worthy of their love. You will be, if you seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness. Be unselfish, not because you are anxious to be thought unselfish, but because God bids you love your neighbour as He has loved you. Consider the interests and the pleasures of others; make real sacrifices for them. And love will come to you without any anxiety on your part; anxiety to be liked only makes us awkward and tiresome. Yes, and in the deepest things, does not the same law hold good? Anxiety about our souls is as foolish and as futile as anxiety about our bodies.

If you want eternal life with God, sow the right seed. Day by day draw near to God in prayer; day by day ponder His word and answer to His call; receive the Body and Blood of the Lord. If things go wrong in your spiritual life, "go, show yourself to the priest," as simply and as naturally as you would "go, show yourself" to the doctor. Take God at His word; do the little that lies in your power, and trust His love to do the rest. There are people who are always in anxiety about their souls, always looking within themselves, and distressed at what they find there, and yet who draw no nearer to God by all their anxiety. Sow the right seed. Pray to see God's will, and when you see it, follow it. Then be careful for nothing, cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you, and knows your needs far better than you can know them.

### III

So, brethren, we see what our Lord teaches us. There are two lives open to us, and we can choose which we will. We can live in the world's way, and then we must provide for ourselves, or we can live in God's way, and then God will provide for us.

There is, firstly, the way of the world. We look at ourselves, and at all our various needs, and then we look into the future, and wonder how they can all be satisfied. We want so much—that is the difficulty. We want food and clothing and housing; we want pleasure and recreation and holidays; we want—at any rate some of us want—to live and die at peace with God. And so we suppose that what we have to do is to divide our attention between all these objects of desire, to see how much time we can give to each, and take care that, in gaining one, we do not miss another. We become like jugglers at a fair, throwing up a great number of balls, and trying to keep them all going at the same time. Some of our actions are just to make money, others are just to gain pleasure,

others to make us popular, and others—if there is time for them—that we may stand well with God. Brethren, how does it work? Shall an Old Testament prophet describe it for us? “Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.” That is the world’s way. And then, brethren, there is the Lord’s way. We look at ourselves, and at our various needs, and then we look up to our heavenly Father, Who alone can supply them. And we listen to our Lord, as He tells us that, though we may be careful and troubled about many things, one thing is needful. What we have to do is to serve God with a single heart, and He, who knows all our needs, will Himself satisfy them. Food and raiment, knowledge and experience according to our need, love and friendship He will give—“manifold more” in this present life, “and in the world to come life everlasting.” And we say “Amen, that is the life for me”; we give up all our nice calculations of so much for this and so much for that, and go bravely to work at our duty.

“ I would not have the restless will  
That hurries to and fro,  
Seeking for some great thing to do  
Or secret thing to know;  
I would be treated as a child  
And guided where I go.

In a service which Thy Will appoints  
There are no bonds for me:  
For my inmost heart is taught the truth  
That makes Thy children free;  
And a life of self-renouncing love  
Is a life of liberty ! ”



## SERMON XXV

### THE JOY OF THE SAINTS

*(All Saints' Day)*

Rev. vii. 16, 17

“ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

THERE are perhaps in the whole of Scripture no more beautiful words than these. They soothe us like exquisite music; we love to hear them, even before we think about them, or endeavour to understand what they say. And yet surely we should not leave them without trying to understand. There may have been times in the past, when men thought too much about heaven. But our danger to-day is the opposite danger. We believe in heaven, we think of heaven far too little; and for that very reason bear our present sorrows badly, and make too little effort after all that God has put within our reach. Shall we think then, as best we may, of the joy of heaven on this All Saints' Festival? “ Eye hath not seen,” says St. Paul, “ nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” But, as he goes on to say, “ God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” And if you and I have even a small measure of the Spirit of God we ought to understand enough to fire all our energies, and to steel us to endure all that may be laid upon us.

## I

Now, brethren, let us begin with these words of St. Paul. They give us, I think, a great caution, when we think of heaven, and yet a great encouragement. A great caution, firstly. They warn us that no words which we can use, no pictures which we can form, will rightly set forth to us a life so far above and beyond our own. For observe that our faculty of imagination can only work with the material that eye and ear have given to us. The imagination can, indeed, combine in new and wonderful ways the material we have thus obtained; our dreams will assure us of that. But it can never go beyond it. The poet and the seer are just as dependent upon their sense-experience as the most unimaginative of English people. Surely we should remember this, when we read the Revelation of St. John. It may be that St. John saw in vision what he had never seen in this lower world. If St. Paul, as he tells us, was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, St. John may well have seen what here he never saw nor could see. But if he did, he could never convey his experience to us, except in the terms of our own. Just as we could never explain colour to a man born blind, or music to a man born deaf, so not even St. John could explain to us the glories of heaven, in so far as they go beyond all that we have known here. A great caution, then. And yet, on the other hand, St. Paul's words give us a grand encouragement. For they tell us that, through the presence of God's Spirit we are already in touch with these heavenly realities. The kingdom of God, and the eternal life which belongs to it, do not lie wholly in the future; in the Church through the Spirit they are already ours. The way to the knowledge of what God has prepared for them that love Him in the heavenly country lies through the experience of what God has prepared for them that love Him here and now. Far higher and more satisfying will the heavenly

country be than any experience of the Church below; joy will be ours, fuller, more complete, more unbroken. But neither the heavenly country, nor the joy that belongs to it, will be altogether strange to us; they will be but the perfecting, under new and higher conditions, of those blessings of God's kingdom which are already ours.

## II

What, then, we ask, are these spiritual experiences, which will best help us to understand the joy of heaven? All of them find a place in the Festival Epistle; let us consider them one by one.

The first joy of heaven is the joy of rest—rest after labour accomplished and trials borne. What is the meaning of the palms in St. John's picture? Was he thinking of the palms of victory which the Galilean pilgrims had carried, as they brought our Lord in triumph to Jerusalem on the Sunday of Palms? Or was he thinking rather of the palms of the Feast of Tabernacles, the branches of palms with which God's people of old built the booths upon their houses for their festival? There was a promise in the Old Testament that the Gentiles should keep that feast with the Jews in the great days to come, and it may be of that promise that St. John was thinking. And what was the meaning of that feast? It was the feast which commemorated the deliverance of God's people from the bondage of Egypt, and it was also the harvest feast—the feast of ingathering after the labours of the year. Brethren, the rest of heaven will be like that rest. It will be rest after sorrow and conflict, rest after successful toil. And if that be so, be sure that you and I can only know anything of what that rest will be, in so far as even here we do in God's strength labour and overcome. The rest of heaven is not the Lotos-eater's rest, the rest of those who live lives of idleness, because for them the weary millions toil; it is the rest of those who have themselves been weary,

of those who rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. The rest of heaven is not the rest of those who build barriers between themselves and the pain of the world, the rest of those who never mourn; it is the rest of those who have mourned, and so are comforted, and from whose eyes God wipes all their tears. If ever you have been for a time under the dominion of some degrading sin, and at length by God's grace have overcome it; or if ever you have passed through a time of almost overwhelming sorrow, and have not only come out on the further side, but have come to see that God has brought blessing to you through it that could have been yours by no other means; or if ever you have accomplished some long and difficult task, and have seen thereafter of the travail of your soul and been satisfied, you will have known something through the Spirit's revelation of what the rest of heaven will be. In all these ways, we which believe do enter into rest even now, and so learn something of the eternal rest of heaven.

We pass from the first joy to the second, and that is the joy which springs from the Divine satisfaction of all the needs of our nature. "They are before the throne of God . . . and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." That is surely a far nobler and fuller joy than the joy of rest. Consciously and for ever to be near to God—far nearer than here we have ever been—to have Him dwelling among us—to find in Him and receive from Him all that we need for the satisfaction of our complex nature—what can we ask for ourselves beyond that? If the first joy of heaven speaks to us of what we are saved *from*, the second speaks to us of what we are saved *for*—the life which, as St. Paul says, is indeed life, the life of union with God, and eternal blessedness

with Him. Is not the fact of our dissatisfaction here itself the promise of the life, of which St. John speaks? It is just the fact that you and I, unlike the animals, can never be satisfied with what this world gives to us, which assures us that we are intended for a life beyond it. It is just the fact that our hearts are restless till they find rest in God, which proves that it is for God that we are intended, and only when we reach our final union with Him, shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Our nature is planned on the great scale, and the satisfaction which it cannot find here, it must be intended to find somewhere. But what that satisfaction will be can never be explained to us in words. The satisfaction of mere earthly desires—the “having a good time” at others’ expense—will tell us nothing about it. It is only in so far as we long to know God, and by the revelation of the Spirit come to know Him even here, that we can guess what it will be to know Him in the life of heaven. It is only in so far as we do actually learn that the sense of God’s presence with us, and the certainty of His love, satisfy us as nothing else does—that it lights up the whole world, and gives to every right human pleasure a glow and a zest which those who know Him not never find in it—that the words which speak of standing before the throne, and being led by the Lamb to life’s water-springs, will for us have a meaning.

We pass to the third joy of heaven, and that is the joy of service. “They serve Him,” says St. John, “day and night in His temple.” It is no doubt the service of adoration and praise of which the Apostle primarily speaks. The Church of St. John’s day, like the Church of Israel before it, had its night-offices as well as its offices by day, and he thinks of the ceaseless round of human worship as offered still in heaven, as it had been on earth. But I do not think that we should confine his words to that form of service. He knew, as St. Paul knew, that the love of God, and the remembrance of the Passion, can turn



every task into sacrificial worship. Our Lord taught us that the servant who was most faithful in the little task entrusted to him should have authority over the cities; the reward of service would be wider service; and, if that be so, we must surely look in the kingdom of God for those higher tasks which will be suited to our enlarged power. And surely to many of us there will be nothing which St. John says, which will seem to us more attractive than this. If it is better to know God and be satisfied by Him, than just to rest from our labours, it is better to serve Him than to be satisfied by Him. There are those even here who love their work, and ask nothing better than to continue it—the “wages of going on and not to die”; there are those who have laboured for Him, and have been laid aside, those who in this world now “only stand and wait”; there are those, saddest of all, who have only returned to God late in life, and have but few of their days to offer Him. To all these the thought of an eternity of service will be a very glad thought. But here, once more, words will do little for us. It is those who have learned the joy of worship here who will look forward to the joy of heavenly worship. It is those who have learned that to live for God and man, and to forward the high purposes of the One for the other, brings a far deeper and more abiding happiness than any other life, who will look forward to the life of heavenly service.

### III

We see, then, a little of what the joy of heaven will be, and of how we may begin to understand it. And if we ask, how both here and hereafter these wonderful experiences can be made our own, we find the answer in the angel's words in that very passage of which we have been thinking. “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Brethren, rightly understood there is nothing un-

practical in the thought of heaven. Rather it is a thought to illuminate and ennoble our practice, to show us what is best worth doing, and to fire us to accomplish it. It calls us to a life of strong endurance and patient effort to purify our own character. The way of the saints is the way of patience and the way of purity. One by one they come out of its great tribulation. Though not all are martyrs in fact, all are martyrs in will; for Christ's sake they have taken, as He took, what the world meted out to them, and borne it to the end. God calls us not to any self-chosen, self-imposed pain. But we need to remember to-day, that if we follow His guidance, strain and pain are sure to come, and God calls us to accept them as His will for us, instead of shrinking from and refusing what He sends. So again, with purity. The saints are those who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. That is an active process. It was the blood of the Lamb, the life of Jesus, which cleansed them, but it was for them, not merely to seek that life, but to use that life; it could never have cleansed them in any mechanical way. And we, my brothers, who use continually the means of grace—we who week by week, or even more frequently, receive the Body and Blood of the Lord—need to remember that the life that we thus receive needs not only to be received, but to be used by us to cleanse our robes for heaven's high festival. We must go from our Communion, not merely to give thanks for what we have received, but to bring it to bear upon those sins which yet stain the whiteness of our garments, till the last trace has disappeared. We may not give thanks, and act as if we had received nothing. The All Saints' Festival calls us not to beautiful dreams about the future, but to strenuous action now. Let us see that we give it.

## SERMON XXVI

### THE CALL OF GOD

(*Septuagesima*)

Matt. xx. 7

“Go ye also into the vineyard.”

So God speaks to those whom He calls to work for Him. Long now has His work been going on; the end may be very near; for all we know the eleventh hour may have struck, and in one hour more the Lord be coming to reward His labourers. But still there is work that must be done, and God, we believe, is calling us to do it. Tired and old are many of the labourers; many are resting in Paradise, outworn with the burden and heat of the day; we must go in to take their places, and work in the vineyard till the Master comes.

#### I

There is surely something wonderfully appropriate about the Septuagesima Gospel. The first lessons to-day speak of the Creation. The world is the work of God's Hands, and man, made in God's image, is its ruler and cultivator. The second lessons carry us forward to the end. We hear of “a new heaven and a new earth,” and man is no longer in a garden, but in a city; for his life has reached its full development, and the kingdom of God has come. The Gospel unites the two thoughts: we see the long labour which has prepared the way for the glorious ending. God is not only the Creator; He is a householder. The world,

as first He made it, was but a beginning; it was a great estate that needed to be developed, and to realize slowly its possibilities. And man is God's labourer in the world, God's vineyard. He is to uproot its briars and thorns; to train and watch over its vines; to press out at last the generous wine that is to "slake God's thirst";—aye, and do all this, as things now are, in a world of pain and sin, bearing the burden and heat of the day. So, age by age, we see God going out to call His labourers—Jews first, Gentiles later, ourselves to-day. What a revelation this is to us of the meaning of God's calls! They are not just for our own individual salvation, or for the individual salvation of other men; they are for the accomplishment of the whole wide purpose of God, for the coming of His kingdom. How much then hinges on the work which we have to do! How great is the attention and care that we ought to give to it! We do not wish the kingdom of God to be postponed; we would have it come quickly, and come fully.

## II

But it is not on this thought that I wish to dwell to-day. It is upon the character of God Himself, and upon the way in which He calls us to respond to Him. That surely is the great point of the parable. It grows, you will remember, out of a question of St. Peter, "Lo, we have left all and followed Thee; what then shall we have?" And our Lord, though at once He gives the most generous promise, nevertheless rebukes the bargaining spirit, in which the question has been asked, and goes on to show how the bargaining spirit is ever rebuked—how those who bargain are but treated according to their bond, while those who have trusted their Master's character enjoy His unbounded generosity. God is "good," absolutely good—"Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"—there is in His nature a depth of kindness that is ever shining out in unexpected ways. If He claims, as He does claim, to do as

He wills with His own, He does not make that claim with the proud selfish meaning which we too often give to these words, but in the sense that He refuses to let His generosity to us be hampered by any restrictions. Brethren, notice that. There shines the character of our Father Who calls us. The sovereignty of God is a grand truth—we think of it less than our fathers did. But the sovereignty of God is the sovereignty of love. It does not mean that God claims the right to do what His Voice within us condemns; it means that He will give “according to His riches in glory,” not according to the poverty of our merits—that He will consider, as it were, not what it is suitable for us to receive, but what it is suitable for Him with all His resources to give.

“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There’s a kindness in His justice,  
Which is more than liberty.”

“More than liberty”—that is what God’s love demands. “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Or is their eye evil, because I am good?” And the response that God asks from us corresponds to this. He would not have us raise the question, “What shall we have?” He does not wish to see it even trembling on our lips. He would have all whom He calls “strong in faith, giving glory to God”; He would have us all go about the work to which He calls us with an enthusiastic confidence in the generosity of the All-rich, an enthusiastic confidence that the reward of a loving service will be such that every bargaining labourer will think it an outrage upon common sense.

See now how this comes out in the parable. It is early morning, and the householder goes out into the market-place to hire the labourers that he needs. God, brethren, rises early—Jeremiah says so—“rising up early, and sending them.” That is why we often hear His call so early in our lives. There is no work so noble



as God's work; out of the possible labourers He would have the first choice. Never doubt the reality of God's call to you, because it has more or less been ever with you. God rose early for you—that is all. But to return to the householder. He comes into the market, and takes his part in the bargaining that is going on. There is no attempt to overbid the other householders; he offers the market price, and no more. This, of course, corresponds to the way in which God called His first labourers. Look at the Law—what a bargain it is! So much obedience to be rendered, so much reward given. There is the bond—all in black and white, "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough." There is nothing lofty here. It is just the day's wage—just what the worshippers of Chemosh and Rimmon expected from the objects of their worship. God does not overbid. That was the first method—the method with the Jews—and we know the kind of labourers they proved to be. And still, brethren, we may enter upon the service of God in that spirit. We may, as it were, bargain with God. We may compare the Christian life with other lives; we may consider whether on the whole we are likely to get more happiness and prosperity by living as Christians; and, having considered, decide that the Christian life is best. If we choose God's service in that way, I do not know that we shall be altogether disappointed. As life goes on, we shall probably complain of the burden and heat of the day, just as those do who give their service to the world; but we shall receive our penny, and have no right to complain. I doubt, however, if our labour will be very willing, or very efficient, and whether we shall form any close bond with our Master. What can He say to us, when the end comes, but "Take that which is thine, and—go thy way?"

But then that is only the first method. The work is

not being fully done—it never is by labourers of that kind—and the householder must obtain more. So at the third, and the sixth, and the ninth hour he goes out again. And this time his method is a different one. Still, no doubt, he speaks of pay. “Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you.” But all is no longer in black and white. The householder enters into a personal relation with his labourers. They are to trust him; trust his sense of justice, leave it to him to decide what justice demands. He speaks, you see, as one whose character is known. There is plenty of work to be done, hard work, but there shall be adequate pay. “Whatsoever is right I will give you.” Surely we may see here our Lord’s method with His Apostles. He called them to a hard service; He never pretended that His service would not be hard; but, though the reward He promised was great, He left it undefined. The cattle and the flock, the basket and the kneading-trough, have disappeared; the Lord will not bind Himself to give in advance the places on His right hand and on His left. There are but large thoughts of “manifold more in this present world, and in the world to come eternal life.” The hope of reward is left but it has not the definiteness which once it had. They must trust the Lord, and leave their future to Him. Moreover, through the Christian ages, we see this method continued. There is far better work done in the vineyard of God, far harder trials borne for Him, far deeper personal love and trust than the average Jew had reached. But the thought of reward is clearly present, as our Lord meant it to be; and simple minds delight to picture the coming glory, to think of heaven as giving to them the very things they have renounced here. Are we to condemn this? Surely not. If the thought of eternal reward helps us in the service of God, by all means let us dwell upon that thought. We have not “hope in Christ in this life only.” Never—with the poor and suffering especially, who need the thought so greatly—let us speak as if the hope of

heaven were an unworthy motive. It is not so. It is a hope that our Master authorizes, and that He will one day fulfil.

And yet, if I understand the parable rightly, there may be another method yet. Even yet the work is in arrears; unless new labourers are called to work, the night will fall before it is finished. So, at the eleventh hour, the householder goes out, and finds men standing idle still. And now, in the true text—the received text spoils it—nothing is said about payment at all. There is only one short hour for work; the work itself is so light in the cool of the evening that it hardly seems to deserve any wage. The householder says but this, “Go ye also into the vineyard,” and the men go simply to work with nothing to rely upon but their Master’s character. May we not perhaps say that it is to such a service that God calls us to-day? Surely it is true of many of the best Christians to-day that the thought of a future reward has largely disappeared from their minds. I do not say that this is altogether right, but so, I think, it is. God’s service to many of us is so happy a service; to serve Him is to reign; we do not suffer in England to-day as saints and martyrs suffered of old. What can we claim but the pleasant sights and sounds of the vineyard itself? Moreover, to us to-day the future kingdom is hard to grasp; we cannot, and better than our forefathers we know that we cannot, conceive a life under conditions so different from our own. So it is that the thought of reward grows dim, and we are left with the character of God revealed in Christ, and the thought of a great secret that one day we shall know.

“Not from the hope of gaining aught,  
Not seeking a reward;  
But as Thyself hast loved me,  
O ever-living Lord.  
So would I love Thee, dearest Lord,  
And in Thy praise will sing;  
Solely because Thou art my God,  
And my most loving King.”

## III

Well ! there is the parable. And what it said to the Apostles, it says to us all—Work. “ Go ye also into the vineyard.” That is all, and that is enough. Work, not as the hireling works, ever complaining of the heat, ever doing the least that will pass muster. Work, as men would work who were called late, and must make up for lost time. Work as those who would please the master, while the light remains, for “ the night cometh when no man can work.” Brethren, if you have heard God’s call, it is to that He calls you. All round you in England, all over the world, God’s vineyard is waiting. Everywhere there is the cry for work, and more work—for men, and more men. You too must go, not “ stand all the day idle.” The kingdom of God will come, but it will not come till the work is done that prepares for it. Why should we put it off, why should we keep the blessed dead waiting for their final glory, because we will not take our own task seriously ?

## SERMON XXVII

### INSPIRATION

*(The Second Sunday in Advent)*

Rom. xv. 4

“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

So, brethren, St. Paul justifies the use which he has just made of Scripture. Every Christian, he has urged, must be unselfish. He must “please his neighbour for that which is good unto edifying.” And why? “For Christ also pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me.” St. Paul, you see, applies the words of the Psalmist to our Lord Himself, and then goes on to apply our Lord’s example to us. But is this, it might be asked, a legitimate way of using Scripture? Yes, St. Paul says, it is. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.” God, as to-day’s Collect says, has “caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning.” They not only had a message for the people of the time when they were written; they have a message also for us. Age after age God means us to study them, and to find in them a strength and an encouragement which will be of the greatest value to us in holding fast our Christian hope.

#### I

You will not wonder, brethren, that I take these words as my text to-day. The Second Sunday in



Advent is, we might almost say, the annual festival of Holy Scripture. And I am sure that to those of us who know by experience something of what Holy Scripture is, the day always comes with a special gladness of its own. We need a day in which to think of all that the Bible has been to us in the past, a day in which to thank God for it, a day in which to renew before God our resolution to use His great gift as we should. Is there not a danger just now of the Bible ceasing to be to us what it was to those who went before us in the faith of Christ? Life is so full to-day, that we have little time for reading, and when we do read, we read mostly for pastime. What is new attracts us more than what seems familiar, and so too often the greatest books of the world are neglected for what is utterly feeble and ephemeral. Moreover, the change that has passed over English religion in the last fifty years has not been altogether favourable to the study of the Bible. We who desire to serve God to-day make far more use of the sacraments than our grandparents did; and though, of course, the communion with our Lord which we find in them ought to fire us with a more earnest desire to learn all that we can learn of Him from Scripture, that is not always the consequence in people like ourselves. Our feeling rather is that we have only a limited time to spare for religion, and, if we give more in one way, we must give less in another. Once more, the change which has come in our way of regarding the Bible has not been altogether healthful in its operation. Many of us feel to-day that we hardly know what to believe about it. And though we may quite recognize that modern knowledge makes the Bible in some ways more interesting, that is far from compensating us for the weakening of our old confidence in what we find there. May I, then, try this morning to suggest some thoughts which may be helpful on this great subject? I want to show you in the first place what that inspiration is which

gives its undying value to Holy Scripture, and then how we in our Bible-study ought to profit by it.

## II

What, then, we ask, is inspiration? The word, of course, means breathing in. It describes an action of the Spirit of God upon the soul of man, by which the soul is raised above itself, and receives powers which would not otherwise belong to it. Inspiration is essentially a fact of experience, and only by experience can it be understood. We cannot, that is to say, begin with some self-chosen conception of our own of what inspiration must do for us, and argue that, if a man is inspired, he must be infallible, or free from human passion, or possess some other characteristic which inspiration in our judgment ought to carry with it. Here, as elsewhere, we must patiently examine the facts. We must take the inspired man, or the inspired book, and learn what inspiration is from what the one or the other is found to be. Now, if we thus examine the Holy Scriptures, I do not think we shall have much difficulty in seeing in what the inspiration of its writers consists. We must distinguish, I think, between revelation and inspiration. By revelation God unveils that which He desires us to know; by inspiration He opens the eyes of our minds to see what He has thus unveiled. Divine truth has been and is revealed to us in many ways; it is revealed to us in nature, in the facts of human life, in the history of the world, especially in the history of God's chosen people Israel, above all in the Person, the Life, and the Work of our Lord Jesus Christ. All this revelation of the truth now lies open before us, but it does not follow that we all at once lay hold of it. On the contrary, though the revelation is there, the world recognizes it scarcely at all. And so beside God's gift of revelation, there is needed His gift of inspiration. The Spirit of God must so enter into us, that what God has revealed we may be able to see. Now that,

I think you will find, is what has taken place with the writers of the Bible. The revelation which lay open before them was very largely the same revelation which lay open before other men. What inspiration has done for them is to enable them to see the revelation, and so through their record of what they saw to help us to see it also.

Now, of course, we are dealing here with a vast subject, on which I can but touch this morning. But let me illustrate my meaning by a few examples. What is God's first means of teaching us His truth? It is the revelation contained in nature and in human life. Consider nature first. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." True; but to whom do they declare it? Do they declare it to the cattle out in the fields? Certainly not. Do they even necessarily declare it to the astronomer in his observatory? Certainly not, again. So great an astronomer as Laplace learns no more of God from the starry sky than the cattle do. The heavens only declare the glory of God to the man who is inspired to see the revelation. The writers of the Bible see it from the first to the last. Look at the first chapter of Genesis. The world of the Hebrews was precisely the same as the world of the Babylonians; their ideas about the world's creation were very similar. But to the Hebrew thinker the world revealed grand truths about the unity of God, and the greatness of man, while to the Babylonian it revealed nothing of the kind. And why? Because the Hebrew was inspired, and the Babylonian was not. Or consider something very different from the order of nature—I mean the tangled skein of human life. What it reveals, to those who have eyes to see it, is the utter worthlessness of all the ends for which we are striving, while we do not believe in the abiding value of our own personalities or in the reality of the great purpose which God is working out. Now the writers of the Bible see that also from first to last, while the vast majority of the world do not. People

complain, for example, that Ecclesiastes is a pessimist—that he takes a false and morbid view of human life. Ecclesiastes had not been taught as we have. Christ had not revealed to Him either the value of the human soul, or the great purpose which God has for the world. Had it been otherwise, he could never have written his book. But the view that he takes of human life is the view that all sensible people ought to take, while they have no higher faith than his. And yet thousands upon thousands around us, who no more understand the value of the soul and the great purpose of God than Ecclesiastes understood them, persist in thinking that they can somehow satisfy themselves with pleasure, or fame, or learning—things which, as Ecclesiastes saw, can never satisfy them at all. The revelation is there in human life, for them as well as for Ecclesiastes of old, but because they are not inspired they do not see it, while because he was inspired he did. Or consider the greatest revelation which the Old Testament contains, the revelation of God's character and purpose as seen in His dealings with His people Israel. What a wonderful revelation prophets and historians found in the history of their people of "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty"! They found the revelation, because the revelation was there, but it was inspiration which enabled them to find it. A modern historian, if only he is blind enough, may study Israel's history with the utmost industry and the most approved modern methods, and see nothing in it but the struggles of two little Semitic kingdoms to maintain their existence in the face of more powerful neighbours, and their final worsting in the conflict. The inspiration of the Old Testament historians does not mean a supernatural power to write infallible history; it is seen in their power to recognize in the history of their people that revelation of God which is really there. Or consider

the inspiration of the writers of the New Testament. In what does that consist? There we have revelation at its highest, and so we have inspiration at its highest too. In our Lord Jesus Christ God was revealed as never before; our Lord could say that He that had seen Him had seen the Father. In His work for us, in His Death and Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Ghost, we have the highest possible revelation of the love of God, of our own sin, and of God's willingness Himself to free us from our sin if only we ourselves desire it. But again it requires inspiration to see the revelation. Thousands then looked and thousands still look at Christ and yet never find God in Him; they read the story of His Death and Resurrection and find in it no fresh hope whatever for themselves. If the writers of the New Testament saw in our Lord God Incarnate, and in His Death and Resurrection a Gospel for the world, that was because they were inspired to see it. Flesh and blood, as our Lord said, did not reveal it unto them, but His Father Who was in heaven. You see how the same thing appears all through. Inspiration waits on revelation. Ecclesiastes did not require the same inspiration to see the vanity of life without the Christian hope as St. John required to see in our Lord the Word made flesh, but God's method is the same all through. Ever His revelation is given to us in facts, rather than in words, and ever His inspiration follows to open our eyes to see the revelation which the facts contain.

### III

You see then, brethren, where the unique value of the Bible lies. It lies in the fact that it was written by men who were inspired to see the revelation of God, and who have recorded for all time that which they saw. And how should we use the Bible? Brethren, we should use it that we may be helped to see all that they saw. We shall not necessarily be inspired ourselves, because we are students of the words of inspired men. Inspiration must be sought from God, Who



alone can give it to us. But if we have even a little of the Spirit of God, we shall find in the Bible the record which that Spirit will make luminous to us. At first, it may be, we shall not see in the facts of which its writers speak to us, all that they saw. Full inspiration may not be ours all at once. There is many a man who finds God in nature, who does not find Him equally in human history. There is many a man, again, who finds God in history, who does not find Him specially in the history of Israel. There is many a man with a profound reverence for our Lord, and a true desire to follow Him, who does not see in Him all that St. John saw. There is many a man, once more, who finds in our Lord's self-sacrifice at Calvary a most moving example, and in His Resurrection a new hope of immortality, who does not yet see in them, as St. Paul saw, a Gospel of Divine salvation. But all of us may find something to help us, and if, as St. Paul says, "whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule" we "walk," God will lead us on step by step, and reveal to us what at present we are not enough inspired to see. Admirably does St. Paul remind us in the text to-day that we need patience as well as the comfort of the Scriptures—patience in intellectual difficulties as in all others—if we are to embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life. But meanwhile, if we are reverent students of the Bible, we shall find the comfort of the Scriptures very real comfort. We shall see how men, who at one time believed, it may be, less than we ourselves believe, were led on through God's inspiration to believe far more; we shall be able to trace the path by which they travelled; and at last, taking heed unto the sure word of prophecy, "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place," the full day, as St. Peter so beautifully says, will "dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts."

SERMON XXVIII

THE REALITY OF FORGIVENESS

Matt. ix. 6

“ But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins . . . Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.”

WHAT a strange proof of His power to forgive our Lord here offers to us ! God's forgiveness is wonderful—no doubt of that ; and the cure of a palsied man is wonderful also. But how is the fact that our Lord possessed the one power a proof that He possessed the other ? Shall we say with Nicodemus that no man could do these signs that the Lord did, unless God were with Him ? How does that help us ? Though it be the same God, Who worketh all things in all, yet, as St. Paul says, “ there are diversities of workings.” Because God has bestowed one power upon us, it by no means follows that He has bestowed another.

I

Now, brethren, in order to answer this question, we shall have to go rather far afield. But indeed it will be worth while to do so. For to understand our Lord's words here will be to understand something which many to-day very little understand—the purpose of our Lord's miracles, and the place which they occupied in the work which He came to do. People to-day sometimes speak as if the miracles related of our Lord, instead of being a help and support to our faith, were on the contrary somewhat of a hindrance to it, as if we could believe in Him and His Divine

mission to us all the more easily, if the record of His life and teaching were not encumbered by any such stories as that which was read to us in to-day's Gospel. Well, if it were so, we should certainly be very unlike all other Christians. From our Lord's day to our own, His works of power and love have always done very much both to awaken and to support the faith of His servants, and except within small and somewhat academic circles they do so still. To go no further than to-day's Gospel, how many thousands have heard in the words, "Arise, take up thy bed," a call to themselves to arise out of the moral and spiritual paralysis in which sin has involved them, and a promise that as they seek to arise, the power of the Lord will be present to enable them to do so! But true as this is, it is not this upon which I desire to lay stress. I want to show you, if I may, what our Lord's own purpose in His miracles was, and how essential they were to the fulfilment of the task which the Father laid upon Him. Nor will this, I hope, be without practical utility to any one of us. Even though we do not see that it matters to us whether or no our Lord in His earthly life had the power to raise the palsied from their beds, it matters certainly very much to every one of us whether or no our Lord in His present heavenly life has power on earth to forgive sins. If we do not personally need the exercise of the one power, we all personally need the exercise of the other. And if the miracles which our Lord worked on the bodies of men when He was here have anything to do with convincing us that our Lord can work upon us that spiritual miracle of forgiveness of which we all stand so very much in need, it is surely well worth while to understand it.

## II

What, then, is the explanation of the difficulty which our text suggests to us? Let us notice first where this miracle was worked. It was worked at Capernaum,

our Lord's "own city," and the people of Capernaum were the people of all the Galileans who were most familiar with our Lord's message. And what was that message? It was, the Gospels tell us, the good tidings of the kingdom of God. It is true that our earliest Gospels do not relate that message in any detail. The Gospels were written for those who were already Christians, and knew already what our Lord's message had been. Had they not known and accepted it, they would not have been Christians at all. But that His message was primarily the proclamation of the kingdom of God the Gospels leave us in no doubt whatever. Long before our Lord came the people of God had been looking forward to that kingdom. They believed that God was about to establish His own rule in the world, and that under that rule all the evils of the world would pass away. That Divine kingdom was no doubt very variously conceived; one prophet had thought of it in one way, and one in another. But in spite of all differences in detail, there were two convictions which never varied. The first was that in the kingdom of God the people of God would live in perfect union with God Himself. He would, in Old Testament language, have forgiven their iniquity, and their sin He would remember no more. And the second was that just because of this, all the ills which spoil our present life, all suffering, disease and death, would have passed away. It would not be we only who were changed; the world itself and all the conditions of our life would be changed with us. Now our Lord's message was that this kingdom was at hand, and, though less clearly, that He Himself would be the centre of it, and the means of bringing it about. That is why the Galilean peasantry responded to Him as they did. When people are miserable and downtrodden, no message which does not promise the removal of present ills has any power to appeal to them. Of what use would it be to-day to speak to the poor Armenians simply of the forgiveness of sins and of the duties of morality? Our Lord's

message was the very message which the poor require. It spoke of the good time coming, when God's rule would be established. If He spoke of the forgiveness of sins, that was because, if our sins are not forgiven, we shall be excluded from the kingdom. If He insisted in the strongest way upon moral duty, that was because, if we only call Him Lord, Lord, and do not the things that He says, we shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. It was the kingdom, and not forgiveness or moral duty which had the first place in His message.

Now how were our Lord's miracles related to this message? In this way. They were foretastes and illustrations of the blessings which the kingdom of God would bring, and proofs of our Lord's Divine mission to establish it. So our Lord speaks of them again and again. "If I," He says, "by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." The kingdom of God, that is to say, is not merely at hand; in our Lord it is already present, and the Lord's wonderful works show that it is. So it is again when St. John the Baptist sends to our Lord from prison to ask the question, "Art Thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" How does our Lord reply? "Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them." You see the point of the Lord's answer. Is He, or is He not, the One Who is coming to establish the kingdom? Of course He is, for He is already doing so. These blessings that the Lord brings are precisely the blessings which the kingdom of God was to bring; what other proof of our Lord's mission can possibly be required? Our Lord does not offer His miracles as an external proof of something unconnected with them; He proves that He is sent to establish the kingdom of God by Himself providing these wonderful foretastes of it. May I try to make this clearer by an illustration?



About a year ago, I was accosted close to the Cathedral by a young artist. He told me that as an artist the war had hit him very hard; nobody was buying pictures; and he asked me, if I possibly could do so, to give him a commission to paint one for me. Now how was I to know that he was an artist? It is true that he gave me his name, and seemed to expect that it would be familiar to me. But unfortunately it was not. How was I to know that he was what he claimed to be? Would it have been of any use for him to try to prove his words by performing on the spot a number of clever conjuring tricks? Of no use at all. I should naturally have said, "Yes! they are very clever; I don't know how you do them; but I do not see how the fact that you can do these tricks is any proof that you can paint a picture." But suppose that he had said, "If you will just be still for five minutes, I think I can convince you," and had then with lightning rapidity drawn an amazingly clever sketch of me on the back of an envelope, then I should have had something to go upon. The sketch would not have been a mere external proof at all. My acquaintance would have proved that he was an artist by doing what an artist alone could do; and, though before I gave him a commission, I should have required to make an act of faith, the act of faith would not have been altogether unreasonable. Now so it is with our Lord's miracles. Some of you may remember how a clever writer of the last generation, with our Lord's miracles in his mind, said that he himself would not make what he wrote any truer or more convincing, if he was able to change his pen into a penwiper. Possibly not. But if he thought that our Lord's miracles were on that account valueless as a proof of His Divine mission, he missed the whole point of them. Our Lord's miracles, as we have seen, were not external proofs of that kind at all. They were like the artist's sketch, illustrations of precisely the power which He claimed, the power to establish the kingdom of God.

## III

We are now in a position to understand our Lord's words in our text to-day. The forgiveness of sins and the passing away of human pain are both characteristics of the kingdom of God, and they go inseparably together. The Jews knew well what we so often forget, that the pain of the world is largely the punishment of the sin of the world; that physical evil and moral evil are inseparably bound up together, and that no one can possibly have the power to banish the one, who has not also the power to banish the other. If the Lord can say with power, "Arise and walk," He must also be able to say with power, "Thy sins are forgiven."

Have, then, our Lord's miracles no interest for us? Surely they have the most profound interest. Brethren, let me speak to you in the plain words that the subject demands. This world will not last for ever. Those awful scenes, of which day by day we read, thank God, will one day be ended. The kingdom of heaven is at hand, and one day it will come. But the question for you and me is whether we shall ourselves have any part in it. It will be introduced by judgment. You and I have sinned, all of us very frequently, and some of us very seriously, and if the Divine forgiveness has not been given us, we are at this moment what our sins have made us. Forgiveness is necessary. The question is whether the Lord Jesus Christ can accomplish this wonder for us, whether the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. He says that He has; He could not establish the Divine kingdom without it; and one proof He offers us is that He has shown Himself able to remove the suffering which is the consequence of sin. Certainly that is not the only or the chief proof; the experience of His servants all down the ages of our Lord's redeeming power will be to most of us far more convincing. But that proof was not available in our Lord's earthly life; He gave the other, and it stands firm still.

SERMON XXIX  
THE APPEALS OF GOD

(*St. Etheldreda's Day*)

Luke vii. 31-35

"Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like unto children that sit in the marketplace, and call one to another; which say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep. For John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! And wisdom is justified of all her children."

WHO but our Lord would have given us this comparison? Our Lord was the Son of man; nothing that belongs to our human life was beneath His notice. What a range of observation is revealed by His parables! He knows the ways of kings and of courtiers, of merchants and of landed proprietors, of fishermen and of sheepmasters. Yes! and He knows the ways of children, even in their least attractive moments. Who does not recognize the mood which our Lord here describes? Every suggestion is met in the same way. "Let's play at funerals." "Don't want to." "Then let's play at weddings." "Don't want to." So it was, the Lord says, with the people of His day; there was no pleasing them. Appeal as God might, they always thrust His appeal aside.

I

What, let us first ask, was our Lord's immediate meaning? God had appealed to the Jewish people in

two distinct ways. He had appealed to them through the grand ascetic figure of the Baptist, and He had appealed to them through our Lord with His deep human sympathy; but in each case they had refused to listen. The message of the Baptist and the message of the Lord were substantially the same. They proclaimed the coming of the same Divine kingdom, and warned men of the same judgment; they called men to the same repentance that they might be ready for both. But though the message was the same, the manner of its delivery was different in the two cases. Do we not feel the difference, not only in the bearing, but in the words of the two messengers? The stern ascetic, who lived apart from men, put the emphasis upon the judgment; the Saviour, who lived among men, put the emphasis upon the kingdom which lay beyond it; and thus, while the message of the one was predominantly sombre and terrible, the message of the other was predominantly gracious and winning. Moreover, the difference of the messengers was apparently reflected in their followers. The followers of the Baptist were like children playing at funeral; they were ascetics like their master, fasting for their own and the nation's sins. The followers of our Lord were like children playing at wedding, "sons of the bride-chamber," as our Lord said, "who could not fast as long as the bridegroom was with them." Somehow or other, the message, though substantially the same, produced different results in those who accepted it. But our Lord's trouble was not this. It was that with the majority of the people the message produced no result at all. They refused to listen to either messenger, and attempted to justify their refusal by slandering both. They said that the Baptist had a devil, or, as we might express it, that he was afflicted by religious mania. They said of the Lord: "Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." There was no pleasing them either way. They were much too luxurious and self-indulgent to listen

to the one, and much too proud and censorious to appreciate the Other.

## II

Now, brethren, we see here something which has often been repeated since our Lord's day. God speaks to us through many messengers, and too often we thrust them all equally aside. Let us consider how this is. Men, as we know, differ widely one from another. They differ in their temperaments, in their experience, in their outlook upon the world; and, just because they so differ, they apprehend the Christian message in different ways. The Christian message contains much which is solemn and even alarming, while it also contains much that may well fill us with hope and joy; and men of one temperament will lay hold most easily of one side of it, while men of another temperament will lay hold most easily of the other. Moreover, what is true of different men is also true of different ages. There have been ages in the past, as there may be in the future, in which outward misery and disaster have led men to lay hold most easily of the stern side of Christianity. There have been ages again, in which peace and prosperity and national expansion have tended to thrust the sterner truths into the background, and bring to the fore the other elements which Christianity contains. Nor is this all. The same truth may be differently regarded. Our Lord tells us that this life will be followed by another, that for all His true followers earth is the ante-chamber to heaven. But how does that lead us to regard our present life? Here the best Christians may differ one from another. To some the present life will seem already touched by the glory of the future; the kingdom of God begins here, and already is making all things new. To others it will not be so. They will not say that earth is the ante-chamber to heaven, but that it is only the ante-chamber; the glory of the future will make the present all the darker by its contrast with it. Now I need not



say that the way in which Christianity is apprehended will determine the way in which it is preached. One prophet of God will be characteristically a prophet of judgment; he will wail, and call men to weep. Another will be characteristically a prophet of grace; he will pipe, and call men to dance. So it is that the wisdom of God varies the form of the appeal which He makes to us. He provides for each man and for each age not only the unchanging message but also the appropriate messenger. If only we enter the kingdom, we may enter it by any gate we will. But suppose that, instead of profiting by God's goodness to us, we take advantage of the necessary limitations of the various messengers to excuse ourselves from listening to any of them; suppose that like the children in the market-place we "won't play" at all, how is God to deal with us then? Ah! it is only too easy so to act; let me show you what I mean.

Think, brethren, of the ways in which God's Word has been preached in our own city of Ely. You know the strange vicissitudes of Church life in this place. First, we have St. Audrey with her monks and nuns; then, after the Danish invasion, we have the Church served by a married clergy; then we have the Benedictine monastery of the Middle Ages, and then we have the system which we know to-day. The essential Christian message has been the same throughout—the approaching judgment, the approaching kingdom, the Divine redemption through which the judgment may be borne, and the kingdom made our own. But how differently that message has been delivered at one age and at another! How easy it has always been to criticise the messenger instead of attending to the message!

Consider, firstly, the monastic system, to which we owe not only our glorious Cathedrals, but our own conversion to the Christian faith. What is monasticism? Monasticism is simply Christianity, as it shapes itself under the conditions of a particular age. Life is short, eternity is long; the world is full of disorder and misery;

true life and peace will be found in their perfection in God's kingdom alone. What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? It is not monasticism which says these things; it is Christ our Lord Who says them. To deny that our Lord was an "otherworldly" teacher is quite impossible. If we do not accept this teaching of His, we have no right to claim to be His followers. The monastic life is one way, and an entirely intelligible way, of acting upon it. What would St. Audrey have said to us, had we upbraided her for her desertion of her husband, and of the little earthly kingdom, of which she was called to be queen? What would she have replied, had we asked her how the world was to be carried on, if all acted as she did? I doubt if St. Audrey would have rested her case upon her special vocation. Her reply would, I think, have been far more startling. She would have said that she did not propose to "carry on the world"; the sooner it was ended the better. "What," she would have said, "is the use of bringing more children into such a world as this? What is the use of these petty kingdoms of East Anglia, and Mercia, and Kent, with their eating and drinking, their wars and rumours of wars, their political marrying and giving in marriage? All this will pass away. My task, the task of all Christians, is to win a better kingdom, and a life separated from the world is the one safe way of doing so. Poverty, celibacy, obedience, the ceaseless round of fast and prayer, what wiser or better life can there be for those who must endure the Divine judgment and win the heavenly crown? To the world our life is our witness, and there is no other so powerful. We call men to despise all earthly things by ourselves despising them; we proclaim the kingdom of God by ourselves living for it." That is the monasticism of the first days, the monasticism of St. Audrey and St. Wilfrid, a life grand, lofty, and severe as our Norman nave and transepts. Could the world set that appeal aside? Brethren, it could and did. "These monks," it said,

“have a devil. What have these sour fanatics, these childless men and childless women hiding within the walls of their monasteries, to say to us or to do with us? Of what use are they to the country? How can they understand our lives? What help to us is there in them? Away with them, and give their houses and lands to their betters. If we must have religious teachers, let us have some who will understand us, and whom we can understand.”

So the monasteries passed away, and the witness of the monks was quenched. But God had other witnesses in reserve. If we would not hear in one way, perhaps we would hear in another. So He gave us the kind of messengers for which we asked. We said we did not want people who sat loosely to national and family ties; we wanted men who would understand our difficulties because they shared them; we wanted men like ourselves. So God gave us what we said we required. The clergy of the English Church in these last centuries have certainly not stood aloof from human life. They have been English of the English, with the Englishman's virtues, and the Englishman's faults and limitations. They have been for the most part family men, with the anxieties and the temptations of family men. They have lived for the most part much like others of the classes from which they came. They have not professed to despise simple pleasures; they have been interested in sport and politics and whatever was going on around them. As a rule, they have taken a homely and cheerful view of the Christian religion, sincerely believing it and trying to practise it in their own way, but not suggesting by word or deed that it was anything very heroic. Could the world then set their appeal aside? Oh! very easily! “Who are these people that, when they pipe, we should dance to their tune? What are they that they should speak against covetousness and pleasure, and talk about the world to come? These people are just like anybody else. Who make themselves more comfortable than the clergy

do? They are just as fond of their dinner and their glass of wine as we are. If the world invites them out, they will go fast enough." Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

### III

Brethren, are these charges true—the charges made against the monks of old, the charges made against the English clergy of later days? Yes, in part; and no, in part. The facts are very simple, are they not? If we are monks, we have the special temptation of monks, and many of us will fall under them. It is dangerous to live apart from the ordinary life of men; it is very likely to make us self-centred and fanatical, very likely to make us forget the value to human life of much that has little direct connection with religion. If we live in the world, we have the temptations of those who live in the world, and many of us will fall under them. It is very dangerous to live in the world; we come very easily to be of it, as well as in it. If we have families, we must feed and educate our children; we need money with which to do it; and this means a strong temptation to be worldly. If we have all the worries of other men, we naturally need their relaxations; and this means a strong temptation to waste our time. But if God sends men to bear His message, He must send either men separated from the world, or men not separated from it; and I understand our Lord to throw His ægis over both. He will crown St. Audrey and her sisters; they have chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from them. He will crown also all those who, living in the world, have not been of the world, all who amid their unavoidable distractions have truly preached His Gospel and performed His will. But to all He says in the text to-day, Take heed that in criticising the messenger you do not forget the message. The judgment is drawing near, and the kingdom also. Monks will have to answer for the sins

of monks, and married clergy for the sins of married clergy. But that will be their affair. How about your own? You will not at the judgment be asked for your views on monasticism, or on the married clergy of the Church of England. You will be asked whether you believed and lived by the Divine message that was sent to you. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. "Wisdom," our Lord says, "is justified of all her children." God's message is always accepted by those who desire to accept it. When children reject a suggestion made to them, they say quite frankly and honestly, "Don't want to"; when we reject the Divine message, we say in our more sophisticated way that it doesn't appeal to us. The two phrases mean precisely the same thing. The messengers, we know, are faulty enough, but it is not mainly the faults of the messengers which are the cause of the rejection of the message.



## SERMON XXX

### SACRIFICE FOR THE DEAD

*Preached at a Requiem in a dark hour of the Great War*

2 Macc. xii. 43-45

“ When he had made a collection man by man to the sum of two thousand drachmas of silver, he sent unto Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice for sin, doing therein right well and honourably, in that he took thought for a resurrection. For if he were not expecting that they that had fallen would rise again, it were superfluous and idle to pray for the dead. (And if he did it looking unto an honourable memorial of gratitude laid up for them that die in godliness, holy and godly was the thought.) Wherefore he made the propitiation for them that had died, that they might be released from their sin.”

It is a remarkable incident which these words describe to us. The Second Book of Maccabees, unlike the First, is far from a reliable history; and the story, of which these words form a part, is one of the strangest which the book contains. But the uncertainty which rests upon it in no way deprives the words of their interest for ourselves. Whether or no Judas Maccabæus did as he is here said to have done, the author at any rate regarded it as natural that he should have done so, and the text is thus a witness to a belief held in the author's time, a time probably a few years before the birth of our Lord. That is what is so interesting. Here, just as the hour is about to strike for the birth of our abiding sacrifice, we find sacrifice for the dead. The words have no parallel, as far as I know, either in Hebrew literature before, or in Christian literature till long afterwards. But they are there. How came they there? Have we anything to learn from them?

#### I

Brethren, we have here an example of the development of doctrine. The development of doctrine is a

subject of great difficulty. Great writers of the Church have dealt with it—Newman, and Mozley, and Tyrrell are perhaps the best-known among ourselves—and the last word has not yet been spoken. But two points are surely clear. There is such a thing as true and legitimate development, and there is much which may be called development which is not legitimate at all. Always—even in the history of the people of God—we must remember the fact of sin. Just as the mind of man tends to reject the truth, when it is first presented to him, so it tends to corrupt the truth after it has been received. Moreover, the days of the Church are passed in the world, and heathen ways of thought, as well as heathen methods of action, may pass into the Church, and be all too easily accepted. Not even the gift of the Spirit will prevent this, and we must not assume too lightly that every belief found among the people of God either before or after our Lord's coming has a right to its place. It we are to accept a belief which is plainly new, we must see either that it is a legitimate development of the old, or that it has a basis in new facts of revelation. Now in our text to-day we have two instances of development—the belief in the resurrection, and the practice here based upon it. I need not remind you that the belief in the resurrection, which already existed when our Lord came, was a late arrival among the people of God. Moses and the greater Prophets, had, as far as we know, no such belief. But we can see how it arose. The great hope of the Old Testament, far more universal than the hope of the Messiah, is the hope of the kingdom of God. But that great hope tarried long for its fulfilment. Generation after generation of the saints of God “died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar.” Could it be that the saints who had died for the kingdom would themselves have no share in it? Away with such a thought! God was not the God of the dead, but of the living. The promise He had made would yet be fulfilled, and, when the kingdom came, all who

had lived and died for it would rise to share it. The resurrection was no part of early Hebrew belief, but it was a legitimate development, and the Lord, when He came, set His seal upon it. But how about the practice of Judas, as the text describes it to us? Is that legitimate development too? Sacrifice for the dead is unknown to the law of Moses. Sacrifice is only for the living. Moreover such a sacrifice for sin as the text describes could not, according to the Mosaic law, have been offered even for the living. The dead Jews, of whom the text speaks, had according to the story died for the sin of idolatry, and there could be no sin-offering or trespass-offering for that. How then, we ask, could such a sacrifice be possible? Surely it was the grand new belief that the love of God followed His people beyond the grave that made it so. Of old the sacrifices offered for the people of God had been for the living only, for the living only were regarded as being God's people. But if God counted the departed also as His people, if they all lived unto Him, then sacrifice might surely be offered for the departed also. If God made no difference between the living and the dead, how should man do so? Moreover, in the light of the new faith, death itself, even death for sin, took on a new and more benign aspect. Of old, if a man died under the hand of God, that was thought to be God's final repudiation of him. But was it so necessarily? Might it not in the light of the new faith be but a chastisement profitable for eternal life? The poor dead Jews, who had died with the consecrated tokens of the idols of Jamnia under their garments, had yet died for their country. Of each it might be said, as Prudentius, with rare generosity, said of the great soldier, Julian the Apostate—

*"Perfidus ille Deo, quamvis non perfidus urbi."*

Might not God after all not have cast off for ever? Might He not yet be merciful? So at any rate thought the writer of this book—and perhaps Judas Maccabæus also. "Wherefore he made the propitiation for them

that had died, that they might be released from their sin."

## II

My brothers, have you ever noticed how clearly these new thoughts about the dead appear in the New Testament? There is no such line drawn, as we sometimes suppose, between the faith of God's people before our Lord's coming and their faith afterwards. Thought was continuous, and the Christian faith was not as new as we think. We think it newer than it was, because we are unfamiliar with the thought of the Hebrews in the centuries immediately preceding our Lord. Remove from the Creeds the Holy Name of Jesus, and the story of His Cross and Resurrection, and little remains that was not believed by the Jews before our Lord came. They believed in God the Father Almighty, in a Christ to come Who would be the Son of God, in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Church or people of God, the Communion of Saints, the Remission of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting. Perhaps nothing changed less than thought about the unseen world. All that was deepest, and all that was most fantastic, passed alike into the thought of the reconstituted Church of Christ. Do we then find in the New Testament not only the new faith in the resurrection, but the thoughts that our text associates with it? Certainly we do. In the New Testament, I need not say, the Church militant is one with the Church expectant. We are come "unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Just as the living live in Jesus, so the departed sleep in Jesus; all remain, as they have been made, one in Him. No Christian could regard the Lord's sacrifice as offered only for the living. Christians believed that our Lord on Good Friday passed into the unseen to declare to the patriarchs and saints

of God what He had done for them, and to raise them to a share in His new and glorious life. They must wait, as we wait, for the final consummation, but all that has been won for us by the Lord's sacrifice has been won for them also. Moreover, that gentler view of the punishment of death, which appears in our text, is the view of the Apostles. Surely we greatly misunderstand such a story as that of Ananias and Sapphira, if we regard it as necessarily implying their final condemnation and exclusion from God's kingdom. St. Paul delivers over the incestuous Corinthian to "Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." He tells the Corinthian Church that "not a few" of them have died for profaning the holy mysteries, but he adds at once that "when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." St. Peter, apparently referring to those who had perished in the flood, speaks of the Gospel being preached even to the dead that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." Can we doubt for one moment that, when those who thus believed, pleaded before God the one sacrifice of our Lord, they pleaded it for the dead, as well as for the living? Brethren, if men ask us to-day what we mean by a Requiem Service, we need have no hesitation as to our answer. We are here to plead the Lord's sacrifice before the Father. We shall not say that we can, or that we may, plead our Lord's sacrifice for the departed; we shall say that it is absolutely impossible to plead it at all without pleading it for them. We may plead it, sad to say, in forgetfulness of them, and of the memorial of gratitude that we owe to them; we may plead it in ignorance of the width of its application. But though our minds may be dark, or may be forgetful, the mind of the great High Priest, the great Sacrifice, is not. The Lord is among us to-day in the fullness of His sacrificial life, and "He is the propitiation," not for "our sins" only, but also for the whole world. "The life that He liveth, He



liveth unto God " in priestly service not for us only, but for all who have fallen asleep in Him. Wherever He is—in heaven above, or in earth beneath—before the Father in the heavenly tabernacle, or here present in mystery upon our earthly altars, He cannot deny Himself, or limit the universal application of the Cross and Passion that have made Him what He is. And, if He cannot limit it, neither can we, for the sacrifice is not our own, but His. We must offer it, as He offers it. Lift up your hearts; lift up them unto the Lord. Take your part in all that He is doing. Ask for the dead the rest for which He asks, the eternal rest in Him. Ask for them the light for which He asks, the perpetual light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And if, it may be, some have fallen other than He would have them fall, pray that their death may prove their fruitful chastisement, that "having been judged according to men in the flesh, they may live according to God in the spirit."

### III

My brothers, is it nothing to us to-day that these words of sympathy and hope come to us from the story of the Maccabees? It is a noble story, the story of that wonderful fight for faith and freedom made against overwhelming odds by the Pharisees of old. I know nothing finer in the history of the world. All who fought may not have fought from no motive but the highest. National pride, national ambition, mingled themselves doubtless with purer and deeper motives. But the purer and deeper motives were there, and though the victory won was a short-lived victory, and the cause that seemed the cause of righteousness and truth went down at last, the struggle was not in vain. Brethren, if to-day our hearts fail us as we look forward into the future, let us remember the Maccabees. Is it not wonderful to see that the two things necessary for the fulfilment of God's purpose were their struggle and their defeat? Without the struggle, the people of God would have lost their sense of

and the Sabbath

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a Divine vocation; they would have been overwhelmed by the tide of heathenism. But had they been ultimately victorious, Jewish nationalism, that great enemy of the Gospel, would have had it all its own way; there would have been no people prepared for the Lord. Nay! more. The world-empire of Rome, which seemed the worst enemy of the kingdom of God, was in fact necessary to the spread of the Gospel; without it the kingdom could not have come at all. Do not think that I have come to you as a prophet of evil. I cannot see into the future; history never so repeats itself as to enable us to prophesy. But if we would guard our faith, and the faith of our people, we must remember "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God," and the depth of our poverty both in the one and in the other. We must remember "how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past tracing out." St. Paul does not mean that God's ways are unintelligible;—on the contrary, he has just been explaining them, when he uses these words. He means that they are unintelligible at the moment, and that we must wait for the development of God's purpose to see what His purpose is. Brethren, as we pray to-day for the departed, we shall remember especially those that have fallen in battle, and the cause for which they fell. But—God helping us—we will not let our own faith fail, or the faith of others, whatever the issue.

" Ride on, ride on triumphantly,  
Thou glorious Will! ride on;  
Faith's pilgrim sons behind Thee take  
The road that Thou hast gone.  
He always wins who sides with God,  
To him no chance is lost;  
God's will is sweetest to him when  
It triumphs at his cost.  
Ill that He blesses is our good,  
And unblest good is ill;  
And all is right that seems most wrong,  
If it be His sweet Will! "





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